

# FINAL REPORT on the Modernization of Congress

Every so often, Congress establishes bipartisan select committees to look inward, reflect, and propose reforms that allow its Members and operations to work better for the American people. At the beginning of the 116th Congress, one of the first votes Congress took was to establish the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. As the leaders of this truly bipartisan committee—six Republicans and six Democrats—we take this task seriously. We are committed to finding a path forward on some of the tough issues facing the legislative branch, and delivering durable solutions for the future.

The Committee was tasked with researching and offering solutions to strengthen the legislative branch. This includes a wide range of issues, from improving technology and increasing transparency, to reclaiming Congress' Article One powers, and exploring a more productive congressional calendar. The scope is massive. The mission is vital to the future of our government and our nation.

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# Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (SCMC)

## Stakeholder(s):

### U.S. House of Representatives

#### Members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress

##### Derek Kilmer :

*Chair - DEREK KILMER (WA-6) — “I was born and raised on the Olympic Peninsula and saw firsthand how the region's economy struggled, and the impact that had on families and communities. I came to Congress with two goals in mind. First, I want the economy to work better for the folks in my neck of the woods. And second, I want government to work better for them too. “I was excited to serve as Chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress because I think it can make a real difference in making Congress work better for the American people. “Having come from a (mostly) functional state legislature and having worked in private industry, it was clear right away that Congress is a fixer-upper. It’s strange being a part of an organization that, according to recent polling, is less popular than head lice, colonoscopies, and the band Nickelback. From the beginning, it’s been clear there’s no silver bullet to fixing that, but I’ve been pleased to engage with the committee Members on some bipartisan reforms to improve the budget and appropriations process, to ensure Congress can recruit and retain a talented and diverse staff, and to promote civility. “As Chair of the Select Committee, I’m grateful for the bipartisan engagement of the committee Members and have valued the partnership of Vice Chair Graves and all of our committee Members. This past year helped me get plenty of mileage out of my copy of the book Getting to Yes (and my Nickelback jokes).” Derek Kilmer serves as the United States Representative of Washington’s 6th Congressional District. With over a decade of experience working in economic development in the Puget Sound region, Derek Kilmer is focused on getting our economy and our Congress back to work. Derek has a strong record as a problem solver for Washington families and he’s been recognized by veterans organizations for his support of our troops, their families, and those who have served. As the dad of two little girls, he is working to make sure all our children receive a quality education. He is committed to honoring our promises to seniors by protecting Social Security and Medicare. Derek grew up on the Olympic Peninsula and has worked to promote local economic development and to be responsible stewards of our natural resources. Born and raised in Port Angeles, Derek saw firsthand how the region's economy has struggled, and the impact that has had on families and communities. The son of two schoolteachers, Derek was taught to appreciate the value of education. Derek wanted to make a difference in his community, so he chose to study public policy, looking for ways to help economically struggling communities. He received a BA from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs and earned a doctorate from the University of Oxford in England. Derek put his education into practice right here in Washington, first as a business consultant for McKinsey & Company, where he helped businesses, non-profits, and government agencies run more efficiently. He moved closer to the community he was raised in so he could put his experience in economic development to use helping to retain*

*jobs and attract new employers during the decade he worked for the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County. After seeing how the decisions that government made affected employers in our region, Derek decided to put his experience to work in Olympia. He served in the Washington state House from 2005 to 2007 and the state Senate from 2007 until he was elected to the U.S. House in 2012. While in Olympia, Derek was the principal writer of the state's capital budget, and helped author a bipartisan infrastructure package that has been credited with creating 18,000 jobs. He also led a successful bipartisan effort in the Washington state Senate to balance the budget and reduce state debt. Derek was reelected to a fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 and chosen by his Democratic colleagues to serve on the House Appropriations Committee, one of only four ‘exclusive’ committees in the House. Derek serves on the Interior and Environment Subcommittee, Defense Subcommittee, and Energy and Water Development Subcommittee. Derek is a strong supporter of Naval Base Kitsap and Joint Base Lewis-McChord and has secured key investments to ensure that these installations will continue to play an essential role in our national defense and our local economy. He also believes we must provide servicemembers and their families, veterans, military retirees, and the civilian workforce with the support they deserve. Along with fighting for the region’s military community Derek has championed bipartisan efforts to better leverage federal research dollars to spur private sector innovation and job growth and bolster a 21st century workforce. As a native of the Olympic Peninsula, Derek knows the important role that natural resources play in our region, and is committed to protecting our waters and improving the health of our forests. It’s also why he helped found the Puget Sound Recovery Caucus to bring increased focus and attention to the cleanup work that needs to be done to restore our region's waters. Derek has learned that addressing the challenges facing our nation will require an end to political brinkmanship and a focus on finding common sense, practical solutions. He’s a member of organizations like the Bipartisan Working Group which works to bring Democrats and Republicans together to forge greater consensus on a wide variety of issues. In his time in Congress, Derek has been recognized by a wide variety of groups for his effectiveness and advocacy. He’s been awarded the U.S. Navy’s Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest honor a civilian not employed by the Navy can receive from the Secretary of the Navy. Derek has also received a Silver Helmet award from AMVETS and a Friend of the National Parks award from the National Parks Conservation Association, been named a Hero of Main Street by the National Retail Federation, an Outstanding New Member by the Voices for National Service, and a Humane Champion by the Humane Society. Derek and his wife Jennifer live in Gig Harbor with their daughters Sophie and Tess and their Australian Shepherd Truman.*

##### Tom Graves :

*Vice Chair - TOM GRAVES (GA-14) — “I grew up in White, Georgia, in a single-wide trailer on a tar and gravel road. I’m a dad to Josephine, John and Janey, and husband to Julie. I’ve*

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*Stakeholders (continued)*

been a small business owner, a real estate investor, and a Georgia State Representative. I was first elected to public office in 2002, after winning a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives. After serving in the General Assembly for more than seven years, I was sworn into Congress in June 2010, after winning a special election. "After serving in Congress for a decade, I've learned the importance of relationship building and creative solutions in order to address some of the biggest challenges facing our country. That's why I was excited by the opportunity of leading this committee alongside Chair Derek Kilmer. This committee was committed to disrupting the status quo to get Congress working better for the American people. "Throughout the 116th Congress, this committee has served as a bright spot and refuge. One of the things I value most about this committee is how different our backgrounds are, but that as Members we've united with a common goal to improve the way your legislative branch works. Committee Members hail from opposite sides of the country, with different professional backgrounds and life experiences. We've identified opportunities for bipartisan learning, found ways to better connect with our constituents, encouraged bipartisan Member retreats, and showed the American people that regardless of our political differences, a commitment to those we serve should come first. "In Georgia, we are constitutionally required to pass a balanced budget. In Congress, we haven't followed the regular budget process in almost three decades. Fixing the way we spend and guard taxpayer dollars has been a priority for me in Congress and on this committee. "My last year in Congress has been spent working alongside Chair Kilmer and our 10 committee Members, identifying ways to truly make The People's House more efficient, effective and transparent for the people we serve. I can think of no better way to end my career in Congress. I urge future leaders in Congress to use these recommendations as a tool kit to build a better Congress for all Americans." Tom Graves grew up in White, Georgia, in a single-wide trailer on a tar and gravel road. Seeking to turn those humble roots into his own American Dream, Tom took to heart some advice from his father: Dream Big, Work Hard, Achieve Much. That slogan fueled Tom from a young age as he immersed himself in studies and sports. He had the rare distinction of being both a star athlete and a mathlete. In high school, Tom was known to love football, algebra and his mohawk haircut. Tom entered the work force at an early age, flipping burgers and delivering pizza to start. At age 17, Tom started his first business, Tough Turf Land Sculpting, and he hired his first employee. He continued to work and pay his way through college, graduating from the University of Georgia with a degree in finance. After college, Tom worked as an asset recovery specialist for a department store chain, but his entrepreneurial spirit remained. He saved enough to buy a landscaping business and eventually became a real estate investor. In his spare time, Tom was seen riding around on his motorcycle with future wife Julie on board. It was on that motorcycle that they left their wedding ceremony and, some days later, saw a "for sale" sign by a winding dirt road in Gordon County. They ventured down the road and, after some rewiring and plumbing, they called that small farmhouse in Ranger their home. It wasn't until his thirties that Tom thought about running for public office. News came that an abortion clinic was planning to open nearby. Tom supported Julie as she became the founder and president of a peaceful, pro-life organization that opposed the plans. The community spoke and the clinic never opened. Inspired by their success, Tom discovered the power to do good

through public action and ran for the Georgia General Assembly. He served for more than seven years. In the state legislature, Tom used his work experience to craft legislation, such as the Georgia Jobs Act, that would grow the economy and create new job opportunities. He understood the simple fact that when a business pays less in taxes it has more money to hire people. Tom also gained a reputation for taking on excessive government after working on a zero-based budgeting bill that made state agencies justify every taxpayer dollar they wanted to spend, every year. In 2010, the congressional seat for Georgia's 9th district opened. Still dreaming big, Tom decided to run as a "pro-life, pro-gun, tax-cutting constitutional conservative." He had to win four elections in 91 days and was sworn in that summer as a U.S. congressman from Georgia. As a result of redistricting, Tom was reelected in 2012 to represent the new 14th Congressional District. In Congress, Tom serves on the House Appropriations Committee, which determines how the United States Government spends taxpayer dollars. On this committee, Tom serves as Republican Leader of the Financial Services Subcommittee, which oversees the annual bill funding our nation's financial infrastructure, such as the Treasury Department and Small Business Administration. He also serves on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee, and the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee. These assignments put Tom on the front lines of the battle to solve America's debt crisis, reduce regulatory burdens and increase opportunities for Georgians to thrive. He works to balance the budget, cut government waste and reform Congress to focus on saving—not spending—taxpayer dollars. He's also championed legislation to keep American businesses and consumers safe from cyber criminals and hackers. Tom has built a bipartisan consensus committed to leveling the lopsided cyber battlefield to keep organizations and companies safe online. Tom also serves as Vice Chair of the new Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress ("Select Committee"), tasked with studying, investigating and offering reforms to make The People's House even more effective and responsive to the American people. The Select Committee is one of only two Committees in the House that are truly bipartisan, with an equal number of Republican and Democrat committee Members. Tom also serves on the powerful House Republican Steering Committee, which is responsible for committee assignments for all Republican Members of the House as well as selecting committee chairmen. Tom lives in Gordon County with his wife Julie and their youngest daughter Janey. Their eldest daughter Josephine and son John attend Georgia Tech. Back home he's one of the neighbors attending gun shows and cattle auctions. In the early mornings, Tom can be found running mountain trails or riding his bike through the hills of Georgia in preparation for the next triathlon. Tom is still dreaming big, working hard and seeking to achieve much for those he represents in the 14th Congressional District. The Graves family attends church in Gordon County

**Susan Brooks :**

**REP. SUSAN BROOKS (IN-5)** — "Since I began my time in Congress in 2013, I have strived to take a leading role in efforts to promote civility and cooperation across party-lines. As a member of the Bipartisan Working Group, along with my good friend and Chairman Derek Kilmer, we prioritize working with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to produce bipartisan legislation for the American people. It is one of the many

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## Stakeholders (continued)

reasons I love being a part of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is one of the most bipartisan committees in Congress. When the opportunity to join the Select Committee for the Modernization of Congress was presented to expand on the work towards a more civil and efficient Congress, I couldn't pass a chance to provide my insight and guidance. Over the many months of this committee's work, we as a committee have developed a number of strong bipartisan recommendations that I believe will strengthen the working relationships and civility within Congress. "Due to the gridlock and deep partisan division in the country, the American people have lost confidence in Congress. Restoring this confidence is a goal I have talked about since the very first time I ran for Congress. I have always been committed to fulfilling this promise, and I couldn't think of a better way to end my career in Congress, thanks to the Select Committee." Congresswoman Susan W. Brooks represents the 5th District of Indiana, which spans eight urban, suburban and rural counties in Central Indiana, including the north side of Indianapolis. She uses her background as a Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis, a U.S. Attorney and a community college administrator to improve education, jobs, health and homeland security. She currently serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and is a member of the Health, the Communications and Technology, and the Oversight and Investigations subcommittees. Through her Membership on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congresswoman Brooks is working on mental health, substance abuse, biodefense, public safety, telecommunications issues and more. She also serves on the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress where she is focused on restoring confidence in Congress and making it easier for Americans to participate in the business of the People's House. Congresswoman Brooks' strong background in both the public and private sectors includes experience as a proven difference maker in areas such as harassment and discrimination, public safety, homeland security, counter-terrorism and economic development. In the 115th Congress, Susan served as the Chairwoman of the House Committee on Ethics where she worked with her colleagues to restore confidence in Congress. She also previously served on the Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi. In the 113th Congress, she was a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Homeland Security Committee where she served as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. Congresswoman Susan W. Brooks represents the 5th District of Indiana, which spans eight urban, suburban and rural counties in Central Indiana, including the north side of Indianapolis. She uses her background as a Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis, a U.S. Attorney and a community college administrator to improve education, jobs, health and homeland security. She currently serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and is a member of the Health, the Communications and Technology, and the Oversight and Investigations subcommittees. Through her Membership on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congresswoman Brooks is working on mental health, substance abuse, biodefense, public safety, telecommunications issues and more. She also serves on the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress where she is focused on restoring confidence in Congress and making it easier for Americans to participate in the business of the People's House.

**Emanuel Cleaver :**

REP. EMANUEL CLEAVER (MO-4) — "It has been one of the great honors of my time in Congress to serve on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. The work this Committee has done is crucial for our democracy because Congress cannot possibly work for the people if Congress cannot function properly. The approaches we have taken to accomplish this work also serve as an example of how Congress should function at all levels—listening, discussion, and the occasional spirited—but respectful—debate between colleagues who all desire only to find the right solution to a problem at hand. As the Chair of the Civility Caucus, I was proud of the constructive bipartisan leadership we received from Chair Kilmer and Vice Chair Graves. "Out of all of the recommendations made by this Committee, I'm proudest of our various recommendations that would serve the American people by promoting this level of bipartisanship and civility throughout the halls of Congress. If all of Congress could operate the way that the Modernization Committee has, the nation would be in a much better place. I was also heartened that the Committee strongly supported recommendations with the goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce here on Capitol Hill. For Congress to function at the highest level, civil discourse alone is not enough. It demands discourse that is informed by a wide variety of perspectives that truly reflect the diversity of the American people. It is with the combination of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds along with a system that supports constructive dialogue between those viewpoints in which we will find a system that best fights for a better future for the American people. I'm proud of the work of this Committee because I know that our recommendations will help us step much closer to that ideal." Emanuel Cleaver, II is now serving his seventh term representing Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, the home district of President Harry Truman. He is a member of the House Committee on Financial Services; Chair of the subcommittee on National Security, International Development, and Monetary Policy; member of Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance; member of the House Committee on Homeland Security; member of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security; and member of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. Having served for twelve years on the city council of Missouri's largest municipality, Kansas City, Cleaver was elected as the city's first African American Mayor in 1991. During his eight-year stint in the Office of the Mayor, Cleaver distinguished himself as an economic development activist and an unapologetic redevelopment craftsman. He and the City Council brought a number of major corporations to the city, including TransAmerica, Harley Davidson, and Citi Corp. Cleaver also led the effort, after a forty-year delay, to build the South Midtown Roadway. Upon completion of this major thoroughfare, he proposed a new name: The Bruce R. Watkins Roadway. Additionally, his municipal stewardship includes the 18th and Vine Redevelopment, a new American Royal, the establishment of a Family Division of the Municipal Court, and the reconstruction and beautification of Brush Creek. Cleaver has received five honorary Doctoral Degrees augmented by a bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M, and a master's from St. Paul's School of Theology of Kansas City. In 2009, Cleaver, with a multitude of accomplishments both locally and Congressionally, introduced the most ambitious project of his political career—the creation of a Green Impact Zone. This

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*Stakeholders (continued)*

zone, consisting of 150 blocks of declining urban core, has received approximately \$125 million dollars in American Recovery and Reinvestment funds. The Green Impact Zone is aimed at making this high crime area the environmentally greenest piece of urban geography in the world. This project includes rebuilding Troost Avenue, rehabbing bridges, curbs and sidewalks, home weatherization, smart grid technology in hundreds of homes, and most importantly, hundreds of badly needed jobs for Green Zone residents. During the 112th Congress, Cleaver was unanimously elected the 20th chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. In 2016, as Ranking Member of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, Cleaver successfully co-authored the largest sweeping reform bill on housing programs in 20 years, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act, a bipartisan comprehensive housing bill that passed into law with a unanimous vote. In 2018, Congressman Cleaver received the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation. Past honorees include President Bill Clinton, the late Senator John McCain, and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Cleaver, a native of Texas, is married to the former Dianne Donaldson. They have made Kansas City home for themselves and their four children, and grandchildren.

**Rodney Davis :**

**REP. RODNEY DAVIS (IL-13)** — “The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress is the first opportunity in over a decade to take a deep, internal look at how the House functions on every level and how we can make real changes to make it work better for the American people. As a former staffer and a member of the House Administration Committee, internal House operations have always interested me and the opportunity to get into the weeds to bring Congress into the 21st century has not only highlighted for me how much needs to be done, but also how dedicated my fellow Members are to make that progress. “For me, the technological backbone of the House has always been the most vital. Unfortunately, we are often left behind technologically as an institution and seldom have the best networks or equipment available to us to serve our communities. Through my role on this Committee and working with my friend and colleague, Suzan Del Bene, we were able to craft several technology-related recommendations that were ultimately included in the first package of approved recommendations. Because of this, the operational support offices of House Innovation Resources and the Chief Administration Officer will become more service-oriented, and we have created a procurement environment that enables outside vendors with new, proven technology to engage with the House in a secure manner without jumping through unnecessary bureaucratic hoops. This means modernized tools to make Congress more efficient and save American tax dollars such as fostering in new and improved constituent management software so that Members and staff can communicate more directly with people who need help with federal agencies, receiving VA benefits, and other services. “It has been a year of trials unlike anything our nation has experienced, and yet the productivity of this Select Committee shines as a testament to what we are capable of if we unite, across party lines, to improve our government. This Committee’s bipartisan structure has led to real change getting done and it has been a pleasure working with my colleagues regardless of party affiliation. I hope that while this committee may end after 2020, the spirit of always trying to build and improve on what we have continues as a principle of the House

and its Members.” Rodney Davis is currently serving his fourth term in Congress serving the 13th District of Illinois, a 14-county district covering both urban and rural areas of Central and Southwestern Illinois. For the 116th Congress, Rodney serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and is Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, which is the largest subcommittee in Congress and will be a key player in any infrastructure bill Congress passes. Additionally, he is the Ranking Member of the Committee on House Administration—a committee responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the House and federal elections. Rodney is also serving his fourth term on the Committee on Agriculture where he continues to focus on issues important to Illinois farmers and helping people get out of poverty and into a good-paying job. Serving on both the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Committee on Agriculture since coming to Congress has allowed Rodney to be a leader on issues essential to commerce in Illinois. He has played an integral role in long-term reauthorizations to upgrade our waterway, highway, railway, and aviation systems. Additionally, his leadership on two Farm Bill Conference Committees has helped produce farm bills that provide certainty to our farmers, protect crop insurance, strengthen agricultural research, and improve protections for organic products. During his time in Congress, Rodney has established himself as an effective lawmaker who is able to work with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass legislation. He has fought to ensure priorities of the 13th District are represented in Washington. In 2018, Rodney successfully passed legislation reforming the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) disaster declaration process to help level the playing field for rural communities in Illinois. His legislation, which was signed into law in October 2018, requires FEMA to place greater consideration on the localized impact of a natural disaster. This is a major issue for smaller communities throughout the 13th District. Rodney has demonstrated his ability to lead even in a divided government. The Hire More Heroes Act, his bill to help small businesses hire more of our nation’s veterans by changing Obamacare, overwhelmingly passed the House with more than 400 supporting votes and was signed into law in July 2015. This is one of the only legislative changes to Obamacare to be signed into law. On June 14, 2017, Rodney was one of several Republicans who were attacked by a gunman while practicing for the Congressional Baseball Game at a baseball field in Alexandria, Virginia. Congressman Steve Scalise and several other teammates were injured, but due to the heroic actions of Capitol Police Officers David Bailey and Crystal Griner and the Alexandria Police Department, there were no fatalities. Following the shooting, Rodney has made it his mission to promote more civility in politics. He’s an active member of the bipartisan Civility Caucus and the Congressional Study Group on American Democracy and Civics which focuses on promoting civility in politics to young voters. Prior to being elected, Rodney served as Projects Director for Congressman John Shimkus (IL-15) for 16 years helping Illinois citizens and communities cut through government red tape and secure federal funding. Rodney resides in Taylorville with his wife, Shannon, and their three children, Toryn, Clark, and Griffin.

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## Stakeholders (continued)

**Suzan DelBene :**

*REP. SUZAN DELBENE (WA-1) — “Before coming to Congress, my background was in technology. So, it was a bit of culture shock coming to Congress which has not kept up with new devices and tools. One of my priorities in Congress and on the Select Committee for the Modernization of Congress has been incorporating 21st century technologies so we can be more efficient in our work and better able to communicate with our constituents. These issues are even more relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic for Congress to continue to carry out its work. “On the Select Committee, I have successfully advanced recommendations relating to the use of electronic signatures, conducting virtual hearings and more. These efforts will ensure we can continue to move legislation, conduct critical oversight of federal programs, and make sure lawmakers and staff have the tools they need to work remotely during this time.”* Congresswoman Suzan DelBene represents Washington’s First Congressional District, which spans from northeast King County to the Canadian border, and includes parts of King, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties. First sworn into the House of Representatives on Nov. 13, 2012, Suzan brings a unique voice to the nation’s capital, with more than two decades of experience as a successful technology entrepreneur and business leader. Suzan takes on a wide range of challenges both in Congress and in the First District and is a leader on issues of technology, health and agriculture. Suzan currently serves on the House Ways and Means Committee, which is at the forefront of debate on taxes, healthcare and retirement security. There, Suzan is working to ensure all Americans have meaningful access to affordable, quality healthcare. She serves on the Select Revenue Measures, Trade, and Oversight Subcommittees. In the 116th Congress, Rep. DelBene was appointed to the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. The committee was created to find ways to improve and modernize the way Congress operates. Suzan also serves as Vice Chair of the New Democrat Coalition, and co-chair of the Women’s High Tech Caucus, Internet of Things Caucus, Dairy Caucus and Aluminum Caucus. Suzan spent part of her early childhood in Newport Hills and Mercer Island before her father, an airline pilot, lost his job. After fourth grade, her family moved all over the country in search of work. With hard work and financial aid, such as student loans and work-study programs, she earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Reed College. Following Reed, Suzan worked in the biotechnology industry before earning an MBA from the University of Washington and embarking on a successful career as a technology leader and innovator. In more than two decades as an executive and entrepreneur, she helped to start drugstore.com as its vice president of marketing and store development, and served as CEO and president of Nimble Technology, a business software company based on technology developed at the University of Washington. Suzan also spent 12 years at Microsoft, most recently as corporate vice president of the company’s mobile communications business. Before being elected to Congress, Suzan served as Director of the Washington State Department of Revenue. During her tenure, Suzan proposed reforms to cut red tape for small businesses. She also enacted an innovative tax amnesty program that generated \$345 million to help close the state’s budget gap, while easing the burden on small businesses. Suzan’s mix of real world experience in the private and public sector gives her a deep understanding of how to build successful businesses, create jobs, implement real fiscal accountability

and adopt policies that provide individuals with access to opportunity.

**Mary Gay Scanlon :**

*REP. MARY GAY SCANLON (PA-5) — “As a freshman designee to the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, part of my mandate was to bring to our work the perspective of the 2018 congressional class, historic in both its size and diversity. I pushed for improvements to new member onboarding and development, including revamping freshman orientation, optimizing member schedules to better accommodate member obligations to family and public service, and streamlining new office set up. I also sought to increase staff diversity and retention across Congress, in order to increase institutional knowledge and create a staff that better reflects America. I was proud to work on and pass recommendations to advocate for adoption of best practices in diversity and inclusion from the private and nonprofit sectors, and to create a centralized HR hub focused on retaining and recruiting staff with a special focus on increasing staff diversity. “I give much of the credit for the success of our committee to our bipartisan co-chairs, Reps. Derek Kilmer and Tom Graves. I am grateful for their collaborative leadership, which serves as a testament to the merits and possibility of cooperative bipartisan work.”* Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon, an education and human rights advocate, currently represents Pennsylvania’s 5th Congressional District. She was first sworn into U.S. House of Representatives on November 13, 2018. Congresswoman Scanlon previously served as national pro bono counsel at a major U.S. law firm, where she directed and supervised over 600 lawyers in 15 offices in providing more than 50,000 hours of pro bono legal services annually to low-income clients and non-profit organizations. Under her leadership, the pro bono program worked on critical issues, including voting rights, child advocacy, immigration, housing, public benefits, criminal justice reform, free press, and other constitutional rights. The program earned the 2018 American Bar Association’s annual pro bono award. Congresswoman Scanlon also served as an attorney at the Education Law Center, as President of her local school board, and as co-chair of the Voting Rights Task Force of the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. Congresswoman Scanlon’s priorities in Congress include voting rights, education, common sense gun safety legislation, and protecting the rights of children, families, veterans and our seniors. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, the House Rules Committee, and the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. Mary Gay is a graduate of Colgate University and University of Pennsylvania Law School. She and her husband Mark have three children: Casey, Daniel, and Matthew. Mary Gay and Mark reside in Swarthmore with their two rescue dogs, Abby and Emma, a cockatiel named TJ, and several chickens.

**Zoe Lofgren :**

*REP. ZOE LOFGREN (CA-19) — “Congress should continually change in order to better serve the American people. I knew that back in the 1970s when I first worked for this esteemed institution, and I know it still rings true today. From 1970–1978, I served as a staff member for my predecessor, Representative Don Edwards, in both his San Jose and Washington, D.C. offices, and I was elected to serve as a Member of Congress myself in 1994. Putting fresh eyes on the institution I*

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## Stakeholders (continued)

have committed most of my public service career to is an honor, a challenge, and an important mission for a body devoted to serving 'we the people.' As a legislator born and bred in Silicon Valley, I am particularly invested in finding new technological ways for Congress to legislate and connect with constituents. Plus, as a former staff member, I am proud of our recommendations to encourage service, recruit a diverse workforce, and improve staff retention in the House of Representatives. "I always welcome interparty collaboration, and the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress has operated in a bipartisan, open fashion. We need more of that in Congress, and I am heartened by the substantive conversations that took place throughout the past two years. We have come together to suggest giving Congress judicial standing to expedite conflicts between the branches of government. That recommendation on its own has the potential to greatly improve the efficacy of our democracy." "As Chair of the Committee on House Administration, I look forward to continuing this transformative work as we turn the Select Committee's recommendations into real, tangible reforms." Zoe Lofgren has been a Democratic member of the United States House of Representatives since 1995. She represents the 19th District of California, based in the "Capital of Silicon Valley," San Jose, and the Santa Clara Valley. A lifelong Bay Area resident and the daughter of a truck driver and a cafeteria cook, Zoe attended public schools and attended Stanford University on a California State Scholarship, graduating with a bachelor's degree in political science in 1970. Prior to attending Stanford, Lofgren worked the night shift at the Eastman Kodak plant in Palo Alto to save money for non-tuition college expenses not covered by her scholarship. After graduating from Stanford, she attended, with the help of a scholarship, Santa Clara University School of Law, graduating cum laude in 1975. She served as a member of Congressman Don Edwards' staff for eight years in both his San Jose and Washington DC offices. While practicing and teaching immigration law, she was first elected to the San Jose Evergreen Community College Board in 1979. In 1980, she was elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors where she served for 14 years. Following Congressman Don Edwards' retirement in 1994 after 32 years in Congress, Zoe was elected to the House of Representatives. She currently serves on the House Judiciary Committee, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, and the Committee on House Administration. As the Chair of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship, and a former immigration attorney and immigration law professor, Zoe is recognized as an established champion of top-to-bottom immigration reform and a national leader in immigration policy. During the 113th Congress she played a key role in negotiating a comprehensive reform bill in the House Representatives as part of an eight-person bipartisan working group. In 2010, in part due to her work on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi presented Zoe with the gavel used to preside over the passage of the bill in the House of Representatives. Zoe is known for her work on patent reform, copyright issues, digital rights, and net neutrality. She successfully fought to initiate the "e-rate" that provides affordable internet access for schools, libraries, and rural health centers, and she is the author of legislation that would allow the unlocking of cellular phones and other digital devices to give owners more control over their devices. She led a bipartisan effort in the House to decontrol encryption technology. A staunch advocate for digital rights, Zoe was the lead early

opponent of the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and led a successful fight to stop bill in the House Judiciary Committee. Her Online Communications and Geolocation Protection Act would require law enforcement to obtain a warrant before retrieving communications and documents stored remotely or geolocation information about an individual. In 2014, Zoe led a bipartisan effort to close backdoor loopholes on unwarranted government surveillance. The Massie-Lofgren amendment to the 2015 Department of Defense Appropriations Act to stop the NSA from searching Americans' private communications collected without a warrant, and to prohibit the NSA from weakening security protections in devices and software for unwarranted surveillance purposes, passed the House by a resoundingly bipartisan vote of 293 to 123. In 2019, Zoe was appointed Chairperson of the Committee on House Administration by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and confirmed unanimously by the House Democratic Caucus. The Committee on House Administration (CHA) was established in 1947 as part of a larger effort to streamline the U.S. House of Representatives' committee system and to modernize its internal management and operations. After more than 70 years since the committee was established, CHA's two principal functions include oversight of federal elections and day-to-day operations in the House. Historically, the committee has had a hand in shaping legislation that touches on any and all aspects of federal elections. Issues concerning corrupt practices, contested congressional elections, campaign finance disclosures, and credentials and qualifications of House Members also fall under its purview. Additionally, she is a member of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, formed to make Congress more transparent, unifying and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the American people. Zoe is also the Chair of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation. It is the most diverse delegation in the House and outnumbers all other state House delegations. Zoe is married to John Marshall Collins and is the mother of two.

**Mark Pocan :**

REP. MARK POCAN (WI-2) — "As a Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, I spend the majority of my time in Congress seeking to advance policy discussions into the 21st Century. When the opportunity arose to do the same for the institution of Congress itself, I was excited by the prospect. I am proud of the Committee's recommendations pertaining to lobbyist tracking and transparency, and enjoyed working closely with Congressman Timmons on recommendations to improve the Congressional calendar and resolve committee scheduling conflicts. Such recommendations are imperative and will ensure Members have more time to deliberate together and deliver solutions the American people demand. Finally, as a fellow member of the Appropriations Committee, it was an honor to work with Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chair Graves on the development of a Community-Focused Grant Program. It is my hope that this effort will serve as the foundation for the return of robust congressionally-directed spending, consistent with the powers conferred to Congress in Article I of the U.S. Constitution." Congressman Mark Pocan was sworn in as the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's second congressional district in 2013 following 14 years in the Wisconsin State Assembly. A small business owner, union member, and lifelong advocate for progressive causes, Rep. Pocan is committed to using his experience from both the private and public sectors to

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## Stakeholders (continued)

fight for policies that promote economic and social justice and support the families of south-central Wisconsin. In the 116th Congress, he serves on the House Appropriations Committee where he sits on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee; the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration Subcommittee; and the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee. He previously served on the Budget Committee and the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Rep. Pocan is also the Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), the largest values-based caucus in the Democratic Party, where he is a strong voice for progressive values in Congress.

**Dan Newhouse :**

**REP. DAN NEWHOUSE (WA-4)** — “I am proud to represent the rural communities of Central Washington. As a third-generation farmer, I know that many in rural America feel they do not truly have a voice in our nation’s capital. I wanted to participate in the Select Committee to ensure Congress works efficiently to represent every American. “To do so, I believe we must increase civility and bipartisanship within the People’s House. I have a long history of working across the aisle with my colleagues—from the Washington State House to the halls of Congress. “Unfortunately, it seems as though this legislative body has become increasingly more partisan, resulting in separation and division. I believe the Select Committee is the perfect opportunity for Members of Congress from all walks of life to come together to work toward bipartisan improvements. “Not long ago, I had the opportunity to participate in a Civility & Respect tour with Chairman Kilmer. Both hailing from the great state of Washington, we traveled across our districts to speak with small businesses, students, and federal partners about the importance of bipartisanship in Congress. These trips served as beneficial opportunities to hear different perspectives from fellow Washingtonians located just hours away from my own congressional district. “Members of Congress represent diverse communities across the country. They come to D.C. to advocate for their district’s priorities—priorities that other Members may struggle to understand without the opportunity to walk in others’ shoes. That said, I believe collaboration and relationship-building among Members of Congress is the best way to promote working across party lines. “The Select Committee’s recommendations to create a bipartisan Members-only space and biennial bipartisan retreats for Members and their families will not only encourage Members to get to know one another on a personal level, but it will give us all a chance to understand why we advocate for our respective policies. At the same time, the Committee has advocated for Congress’ Article One powers, including recommending a congressional opportunity to provide guidance to the Executive Branch on rulemaking, restoring the proportionality of funding for House Committees, and ensuring that Members are using taxpayer dollars efficiently to best represent their constituencies. “I am also proud of our recommendations to improve accessibility to our nation’s capital for individuals with disabilities and increasing our ability to reach our rural constituencies through increased online access and removing the arbitrary employee caps on member offices. We call Congress “the People’s House” for a reason—and the people should have equitable access to both their Representative and the U.S. Capitol Complex. “As the Select Committee releases their final report, I am hopeful my priorities of promoting civility, respect, and bipartisanship within the People’s House are reflected as we work to better

represent the American people and those in rural communities across our country.” Representative Dan Newhouse is a life-long resident of Central Washington and is honored to represent the 4th District in Congress. A third-generation Yakima Valley farmer, Dan brings real-world experience to Congress as a businessman and former state legislator ready to work hard in support of conservative solutions that encourage job creation and economic opportunity in Central Washington. Dan understands that looking out for taxpayers means that Congress must stay on budget and make the government work efficiently to fulfill its responsibilities. Dan serves on the Appropriations Committees, which exercises jurisdiction on critical legislative issues for the 4th District. Dan served four terms as a legislator in the Washington State House of Representatives, representing the 15th Legislative District from 2003 to 2009. In the Legislature, Dan earned a reputation as a principled conservative willing to work with colleagues to support policies that foster economic growth. From 2009 to 2013, Dan served as Director of Washington State’s Department of Agriculture, where he listened to the concerns of Washington farmers and promoted the state’s agricultural resources. Dan attended Washington State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. Dan is also a graduate of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program. Dan lives in Sunnyside with his wife, Joan. He has two adult children: Jensen, Devon and his wife Halley. The Newhouse family continues to operate an 850-acre farm where they grow hops, tree fruit and grapes.

**William Timmons :**

**REP. WILLIAM TIMMONS (SC-4)** — “Under House Rules, the Select Committee was mandated to have two freshman—one Republican and one Democrat. I was the Republican freshman selected for the Committee. I was able to bring a new perspective to the Committee—a younger, fresher outlook on challenges that we face in Congress. As a small business owner, I am constantly looking for new ways and ideas that will make my business run more efficiently and effectively, and I was able to bring that viewpoint to this Committee. “My priorities were making Congress more efficient, effective, and transparent. The top issues that were of most concern to me, regarding those areas, were the budget process, technology (I was given a pager his first day on the job...), new member orientation, and the House calendar and schedule. Under the current schedule, Members spend more time flying in and out of DC than they do legislating. Naturally, this struck me as counterproductive, and I sought to make recommendations that would have Members spending more time legislating and doing their jobs than traveling. “When I first got to DC for new member training, the freshmen were promptly separated into Republicans and Democrats. It almost seemed that working together was being discouraged from the start. In the second package of recommendations passed by the Committee, there were recommendations included that overhauling the onboarding process of new Members by providing new member training in a nonpartisan way, making training more comprehensive, and promoting civility during new member training. These recommendations were also included in the legislation that passed the House in March of this year. These changes will have significant impact when onboarding new Members by promoting a bipartisan and collaborative environment. We shouldn’t see those on the other side of the aisle as enemies; we should look for ways to work

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*Stakeholders (continued)*

together and find common ground to move forward. “I was incredibly impressed with the true bipartisan nature and collaboration of the Committee. Because of the nature of the committee, Members were able to have in depth and thoughtful discussions and come to meaningful agreements and recommendations. More Committees should be run like this Committee—Members weren’t participating for a soundbite or to make national news. They participated because they were here to make a difference, make significant recommendations, and because of this, ended up enacting real change. This was the first Select Committee in several years to propose and adopt recommendations on a rolling basis, and also the first Select Committee in recent history to introduce recommendations as legislation to ensure their implementation, which passed the House in March of this year. I appreciated the leadership of both Chair Kilmer and Vice Chair Graves and their encouragement of true bipartisanship and the collaborative approach.” William Timmons entered Congress in 2019 with a commitment to bring real reform to Washington. His experience as a former prosecutor and small business owner inspired him to run for public office. As a state senator, he fought for accountability and transparency in Columbia. In Congress, William is a voice for his constituents and South Carolina’s business community as a member of the Financial Services Committee. He was elected by his freshman colleagues to represent them on the Republican Steering Committee and was chosen by the Republican leader to serve on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. William is a lifelong member of Christ Church in Greenville and also serves as a JAG Officer and First Lieutenant in the South Carolina Air National Guard. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Greenville.

**Rob Woodall :**

**REP. ROB WOODALL (GA-7)** — “When I learned of Representative Derek Kilmer’s (D-WA) success in including a provision in the House Rules package to establish a select committee to modernize Congress, I was hopeful to be chosen as one of the Members of that committee. After decades serving on Capitol Hill as both a staffer and a member, I thought that I could provide a valuable perspective. And having worked last Congress with Mr. Kilmer and his great team on the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, I knew this committee would be a workhorse rather than show horse effort. The choice of a serious legislator like Representative Tom Graves from my home state to be the Republican head of the committee removed any remaining doubts about the

seriousness of this reform effort. “I have pride in this committee for a number of reasons, one of which is the collegial reprieve it offered during this Congress. As Members castigated each other in committee rooms and on the House floor, the Modernization Committee offered a space where Members of both parties were focused on working collaboratively to make the institution work better for our constituents, our staffs, and our colleagues. I was also proud to have offered my perspective and ideas regarding Congressional staff recruitment and retention, recognizing their vital role in the functioning of the Legislative Branch. Most significantly, I was proud to incorporate the findings Mr. Kilmer and I worked so hard on in the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform as part of the Modernization Committee’s recommendations for improving Congressional functions. “I couldn’t have chosen a better place to invest part of my final term in Congress. These last two years working with such fine colleagues to reform and improve an institution that I love has been a privilege and an honor. Several recommendations put forward by the Modernization Committee have already been implemented by the House, and more are on the way. But there is still more work left to do to bring this 18th Century institution closer to the 21st Century. I hope that whomever leads the House as Speaker in 2021 continues this partnership committee, allows it to continue its works, and tasks it with even thornier challenges to solve. This committee, its model, its staff, and its Members give me real hope for the future of People’s House and the nation it serves.” Rob Woodall serves the 7th district of GA in the U.S. House of Representatives and serves on the House Committee on Rules, the House Budget Committee, and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Rob was born and raised in Georgia, graduated from Marist School in 1988, attended Furman University for his undergraduate degree and received his law degree from the University of Georgia. Rob has served in a variety of leadership roles during his short time in Congress ranging from Chairman of the Budget and Spending Task Force, where he authored the most conservative budget to come before Congress in the last 5 years, to Chairman of the Republican Study Committee, the caucus comprised of the Republican conference’s most conservative Members. Rob is guided by the principles of freedom, and his proudest accomplishment is helping Seventh District families one at a time through casework and creating a Congressional office that functions for the people.

**Vision**

Members and operations of Congress work better for the American people

**Mission**

To research and offer solutions to strengthen the legislative branch

**Values**

**Bipartisanship:** We knew that if we were going to enact real change, a new approach would be needed. We started by emphasizing bipartisanship at every level of our committee—we worked together not as Republicans or Democrats, but as colleagues.

**Compromise:** We shared our resources and staff, and continually sought out compromises that an overwhelming majority of our committee members could support. We engaged in tough discussions and didn't allow our differences to block a path forward.

**Civility:** The Committee was originally designed to last only a year, but with the support of our colleagues and leadership on both sides of the aisle, we received an extension through the 116th Congress to finish our work. We worked together, side by side, even amidst political divisions (including an impeachment process). Civility and bipartisanship were more important than ever, and we worked hard to chart a path forward.

**Adaptability:** A few months into 2020, as the entire world faced a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, we knew we had to adapt.

**Communication:** Our Members identified ways to communicate our work and deliver solutions for those we serve.

**Racial Justice:** And as the country grappled with a racial injustice crisis, the Committee considered how to improve diversity in Congress. We hosted virtual discussions to understand some of the challenges facing our staff and our communities and issued recommendations specific to the challenges we faced.

### Diversity

**Transparency:** The result over the last 20 months was a series of reforms targeted at improving transparency in Congress, streamlining constituent engagement, cultivating staff diversity and retention, and revitalizing our Article One responsibilities bestowed in the Constitution.

**Accessibility:** We also passed reforms to boost civility and bipartisanship throughout Congress, to make the Capitol more accessible to Americans with disabilities, and to improve technology capabilities in the House. Several of these reforms have already been implemented throughout the House, making us the first select committee in recent history to see our recommendations turned into action. This report provides an overview of our proposals, as well as areas that warrant additional attention by future select committees. We also provide background on the issues we found plaguing Congress and how our recommendations ultimately address them.

**Effectiveness:** Our guiding principle was to make Congress work better for the American people. Problem solving isn't partisan. Over the past two years, we worked across the aisle, with Members from all parts of the country, and with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. At times, it felt like we were going against the grain by issuing recommendations on some tough topics. But that's why this Committee's work mattered so much—even in times of division, we were committed to finding a path forward. The result is a roadmap that current and future Congresses can use to fix both major and minor issues—hopefully with continued enthusiasm for generations to come.

## 1. Effectiveness, Efficiency & Transparency

### *MAKE CONGRESS MORE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT*

Transparency is key to a working democracy. Citizens need information to hold their representatives accountable, communicate their policy preferences, and understand the legislative process. Members and congressional staff need transparency to make well-informed decisions and legislate on behalf of the American people. But we would be remiss to not mention potential consequences of increased transparency. As past reforms have shown us, in some cases the solution intensifies the problem... as outlined in this chapter, the reforms recommended by the Committee are targeted and specific. They offer practical updates to make Congress not only more transparent, but efficient and accessible: streamlining the bill writing process by using a standardized, electronic format paves the way to other reforms, including an easier editing and adoption process. These reforms to document accessibility make it easier to create legislation, limiting error and encouraging efficiency. They also make it easier for the American public to follow how the legislation and amendments will affect existing law. Likewise, streamlining the lobbying disclosure and registration process will make it easier for citizens to know who is lobbying Congress, and who is involved in the legislative process. And developing a centralized, accessible website for federal authorization deadlines, as well as committee and subcommittee votes, will help Congress fulfill its Article One responsibility and even the playing field for constituents keeping tabs on congressional activity. Lastly, requiring transparency at the ECMO level ensures that all stages of the policymaking process are open to the American people. The second way the Committee worked to avoid the errors of past transparency reforms was to pair these transparency recommendations with reforms that facilitate bipartisanship and civility. The common critique of transparency reforms is that the increased spotlight ultimately encourages Members to postulate to the attentive public. However, by pairing these targeted transparency reforms with reforms that facilitate bipartisanship, committee compromise, and substantial deliberation, the Moderation Committee strove to avoid the mistakes of past reforms.

#### 1.1. Bills

*Streamline the bill-writing process to save time and reduce mistakes.*

The Committee recommends that one standard format for drafting, viewing, and publishing legislation be adopted. The U. S. Legislative Markup (USLM)—one of the four formats currently used—is the recommended standard, in machine-readable, XML format. This format was recommended with the support of the House Bulk Data Task Force, Government Publishing Office, and legislative data partners. USLM is an international technical standard for representing executive, legislative and judiciary documents in a structured manner. This “second generation” XML format will allow the House, Senate, and the Executive branch to seamlessly share data.

## 1.2. Legislative Tracking

*Finalize a new system that allows the American people to easily track how amendments change legislation and the impact of proposed legislation to current law.*

... the second recommendation made by the Committee again builds upon previous endeavors. The Comparative Print Project was established in the House Rules for the 115th Congress (Rule XXI, Clause 12) to help Members and staff accurately compare legislative text by using computational text analysis.<sup>43</sup> Using a computational approach avoids human error, making it easier and more efficient to compare edits and amendments. Specifically, the Comparative Print Project was directed to complete three “phases”: 1) a document-to-document comparison, 2) how an amendment changes current law, and 3) how an amendment changes an ongoing legislative proposal. Phase One of the Comparative Print Project concluded in 2017 and can be found for congressional staff use at the website [BillCompare.House.Gov](http://BillCompare.House.Gov).

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**American People**

## 1.3. Lobbying

*Make it easier to know who is lobbying Congress and what they're lobbying for.*

Filing and finding lobbyist disclosures should be straightforward and simple. Thus, the Committee recommends a Congress-wide unique identifier for every lobbyist, to eliminate inconsistencies in the registration and disclosure process.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Lobbyists**

## 1.4. Agencies & Programs

*One-click access to a list of agencies and programs that have expired and need Congressional attention.*

... the Committee recommends streamlining information about reauthorizations by creating a one-stop shop for agency and program reauthorization deadlines. This information should be public for Members, staff, and constituents, and should provide easy-to-access information about the current status of executive branch programs and the Committees that are responsible for authorizing those programs. Congress should collect this information in an easily digestible format to not only help committees meet their reauthorization deadlines but provide the public with clear information on how their tax dollars are being spent. Committee Members should use this resource to structure the reauthorization process, an endeavor that could help Congress return to a timely appropriations process. And the American public should be comfortable accessing this information, not only so they can hold their representatives accountable, but so they can perform their own, individual oversight on the federal government.

## 1.5. Committee Votes

*One-click access to see how Members of Congress vote in committees.*

To make committee and subcommittee activity more transparent and accessible for citizens, Members of Congress, and their staff, the Committee suggests publishing committee votes online in a centralized location. The Committee envisions a centralized, electronic hub of committee votes, accessible via House.gov and in machine-readable format. Each standing and select committee should provide the House Clerk with detailed information on recorded votes within 72 hours.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Committee Members**

## 1.6. CMOs

*Publish a list of active Congressional Member Organizations annually to ensure transparency in the policy making and caucus creation process.*

Member organizations have increased in number and influence, yet there is no publicly available list of these organizations. This lack of transparency prevents the public from accessing basic information about these organizations and their legislative objectives. This recommendation ensures that the public can easily access an updated list of approved ECMOs and learn more about their policy concerns.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **Congressional Member Organizations :**

*Congressional Member Organizations (CMOs) are organizations of Members that are registered with the Committee on House Administration to support a common legislative objective. Beginning in the 114th Congress, the House began allowing certain CMOs to be designated as Eligible Congressional Member Organizations (ECMOs). "To qualify for ECMO*

*status, a group must have been a registered CMO in the preceding Congress, with shared employees from at least 15 House Member offices; register as a CMO in the 116th Congress; designate a single House Member as administrator of the group; and have at least three House employees assigned to perform work on its behalf."*

## 2. Civility & Bipartisanship

### *ENCOURAGE CIVILITY AND BIPARTISANSHIP IN CONGRESS*

The recommendations in this chapter were not only supported and recommended by policy experts but were practiced by the Committee. Chair Derek Kilmer said in the September 26, 2019 hearing, “Every Member of this Committee has demonstrated a desire and willingness to work on a bipartisan basis, and as a result, this Committee has been and will continue to be incredibly productive.” Committee work was done on a proactively bipartisan basis: from staff briefings to hearing decisions made jointly by the Chair and Vice Chair. The byproduct was substantial discussions in committee hearings, and behind closed doors; bipartisan recommendations that were ultimately supported by a bipartisan majority of the chamber; and close relationships between Members. The Committee, well aware of political realities, sought reforms that would slow the growing division between the political parties. While the legislation that is passed is often bipartisan, the process that the American people witness is bitter and divided. In the view of most experts, everything from how campaigns are financed to how congressional districts are drawn also exacerbate many of our problems. While the Committee did not find bipartisan agreement on recommendations in these spaces, these topics warrant further exploration. But this Committee believed there were changes within the scope of its mandate to improve the institution. In order to instill trust in the institution, civility must be restored—in committee hearings, on the House floor, between the staff, and in congressional districts. The recommendations in this chapter encourage the rest of the chamber to consider simple—yet effective—changes that will facilitate relationships necessary to make Congress more civil, bipartisan, and ultimately better serve the American people.

#### 2.1. Bipartisan Space

*Create a bipartisan Members-only space in the Capitol to encourage more collaboration across party lines.*

The Committee recommends establishing a dedicated space in the U.S. Capitol for private, bipartisan discussions. The space should be easily accessible, preferably close to the House floor, and open only to Members from both parties. Something as simple as private space would facilitate much-needed collaboration with colleagues across the aisle. Civility will not grow if Members do not even have the opportunity to socialize with one another and develop bipartisan working relationships.

#### 2.2. Retreats

*Institute biennial bipartisan retreats for Members and their families at the start of each Congress.*

The Committee recommends Congress establish bipartisan, biennial retreats at the beginning of each Congress. These retreats should be not only bipartisan but also include Member’s families.

##### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Members of Congress**

**Families of MCs**

### 2.3. Learning

*Update committee policies to increase bipartisan learning opportunities for staff.*

The Committee recommends allowing personal office staff to participate in CODELs. This policy change would encourage bipartisan connections and collaboration at the staff level and grant them access to important policy discussions necessary to best serve their Members and constituents.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff**

### 2.4. Staff Briefings & Agendas

*Establish bipartisan committee staff briefings and agenda-setting retreats to encourage better policy making and collaboration among Members.*

...the Committee recommends regular, bipartisan briefings and trainings for committee staff, to make committee meetings more productive and nonpartisan. Establishing objective education opportunities will ensure that hearings are informative. Second, the Committee recommends bipartisan committee retreats to establish a bipartisan agenda, discuss committee goals, and form personal bonds.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff**

**Members of Congress**

DEMONSTRATION ONLY

### 3. Capacity

#### IMPROVE CONGRESSIONAL CAPACITY

##### Stakeholder(s)

##### Congressional Staffers :

*For a lot of staffers, the desire to serve the public is eventually outweighed by the inherent need for a better work/life balance, and better pay to afford housing, support families, and put kids through college. This reality puts Congress at a disadvantage compared to the executive*

*branch and the private sector. The Committee believes that Congress should create an environment that encourages the best staffers to stay. These recommendations should be viewed as a starting point in a much-needed, comprehensive process of addressing a broad range of congressional staffing concerns.*

The recommendations described in this chapter reflect the Committee's commitment to improving staff diversity, recruitment, and retention. Members view staff as the backbone of Congress; without them, the institution would not function. Congress is fortunate to attract such talented and hard-working staff, but ultimately has a hard time retaining them. The typical staffer leaves the Hill after four or five years, which is right about the time they've picked up a lot of institutional knowledge and policy expertise.

#### 3.1. Human Resources HUB

*Create a one-stop shop Human Resources HUB dedicated to Member, committee, and leadership (MCL) staff.*

The Committee recommends that the "one-stop shop Human Resources HUB" be led by an HR Deputy Director and comprised of existing offices and staff of the House. The office will be responsible for assisting MCL offices to improve the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce, develop best practices that can be utilized by offices, regularly survey staff, and provide recommendations for competitive compensation and benefits to House staff.

##### Stakeholder(s):

**Members of Congress**

**Congressional Leadership Staff**

**Congressional Committees**

#### 3.2. Diversity & Inclusion

*Make permanent the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.*

... the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 116th Congress (H.Res.6) established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to develop a plan including, in part, "policies to direct and guide House employing offices to recruit, hire, train, develop, advance, promote, and retain a diverse workforce." The Office, however, was only authorized for the 116th Congress. The Committee believed the Office should be extended into future Congresses. If the "People's House" is to make earnest efforts to improve diversity among the congressional workforce, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion should be established permanently and efforts to evaluate its effectiveness and mission should be ongoing. Making the Office permanent will enable Congress to better recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Additionally, once the Office is made permanent, the Committee recommends that a representative serve on the HR HUB described in the previous recommendation. The Committee on House Administration must evaluate the progress and mission of the Office at the end of the 116th Congress, and no later than three years after it is made permanent.

##### Stakeholder(s):

**Office of Diversity and Inclusion**

### 3.3. Payroll System

*Examine the viability of updating the staff payroll system with the goal of transitioning from monthly to semimonthly pay.*

The Committee recommends examining the viability of updating the staff payroll system with the goal of transitioning from monthly to semimonthly pay. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the CAO conduct a review of the costs and logistics of changing the House payroll system from a monthly to semimonthly schedule. Following the review, the House should align with the rest of the federal government's payroll practices and update its pay schedule to address the financial concerns of congressional staff.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff**

### 3.4. Staffing Cap

*Raise the cap on the number of permanent staff and additional staff allowed to work in Member offices.*

Committee Members agreed that raising the cap and allowing Member offices to hire additional staff would help offices better serve their constituents, reduce stress on staff, and thereby improve staff retention. Specifically, the Committee recommends raising the cap on permanent staffers from 18 to 22 and raising the cap on additional staffers from four to six. Because office space is a perennial issue in Congress, Members could consider implementing a more regular telework policy once the U.S. workforce is back in physical office spaces full-time.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**MC Offices**

### 3.5. Pay, Benefits & QOL

*Regularly survey staff on ways to improve pay, benefits, and quality of life.*

The Committee recommends regular internal surveys of staff to collect demographic data and to solicit information to improve staff pay, benefits, and quality of life. The Committee also recommends that the new human resources HUB described above offer departing staff the option of completing an exit survey. By routinely collecting this information, Congress can make data-based decisions to improve staff retention. Congress should also make public the aggregated results of these surveys.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff**

### 3.6. Staff Certifications

*Offer staff certifications, in additions to trainings, through the nonpartisan Congressional Staff Academy.*

The program must offer certificates for the following roles: Staff Assistant, LC, LA, LD, Scheduler, Press Assistant, Communications Director, COS, and District Staff roles. The CSA must also promote these certifications... This training will improve the institution as a whole, by not only making it easier for staff to transfer between offices, but by establishing foundational training for new and veteran staff members alike. In addition, the Committee recommends incentivizing participation in training such as bonuses, establishing a curriculum for senior staff, and a creating a mentorship program for staff.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff Academy**

**Congressional Staff**

### 3.7. Onboarding Training

*Provide institution-wide, standard onboarding training for new employees, including required training.*

Training includes “constituent service training” for entry level staffers who will deal with constituent concerns. For new staffers, the institutional knowledge of how Capitol Hill operates can be difficult to find and understand. The Committee recommends providing institution-wide training for new employees to ensure all new staff understand their role, how Congress operates, as well as logistics like benefits. This training will empower staff to not only understand the legislative process, but their rights as congressional staff. In addition, standardized training provides staff with skill sets that are transferable across offices, which helps improves staff retention.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**New Congressional Employees**

### 3.8. Constituent Communications

*Remove constituent communications costs from Member office budgets and create a share account for communications.*

Remove franking related costs from Member MRAs and move to a central account which all Members can use (up to a pre-determined cap) to pay for franking related costs (this can include telephone town halls and ads on social media). Funding could be provided through the Chief Administrative Officer with each office having a specific allotment available to them. Individual offices use of funding would also be disclosed in the quarterly statement of disbursements. All mass communications will continue to be publicly disclosed via the current franking website. Offices are not required to use these funds and could still use the MRA for all mass communication costs. Additionally, if offices reach the cap, they can still utilize the MRA for mass communications.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**MC Offices**

**Congressional Constituents**

### 3.9. Office Funding

*Reevaluate the funding formula and increase the funds allocated to each Member office.*

The Members Representational Allowance (MRA) formula should be reevaluated and updated to reflect modern office needs and upcoming congressional redistricting, and increased to ensure Congress can meet current and future challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistent retention problems.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**MC Offices**

### 3.10. Pay Bands

*Establish a nonbinding, voluntary pay band system for House staff that includes a salary floor and average salary for each position in Member offices.*

Regular services should be done to ensure the most up-to-date salary information... In order to establish a nonbinding pay band system in the House, current and reliable data on staff salaries is needed. However, the lack of data on what House staff are paid, by position, makes it difficult to compare House staff salaries with either the executive branch or the private sector. While the salaries are public information and listed in quarterly Statements of Disbursement, and third-party websites and organizations compile information on salaries in Congress, the data remains uneasy to reach or access, lacking, and incomplete. Thus, the Committee also recommends that information on annual salaries for the positions in House Member offices, and for Committees, should be compiled either through available information or through a survey. Once the House collects data on staff salaries by position, this information can then help the House establish a reasonable and nonbinding pay band system for staff positions.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**U.S. House of Representative Staff**

**MC Offices**

### 3.11. Health Insurance

*Expand access to health insurance for congressional staff.*

Eliminate requirement that district staff purchase health insurance on D.C. exchange, allowing them to enroll either in a FEHB plan or their state exchange, and allow D.C.-based staff to enroll in the D.C. exchange or FEHB plan. As reported by SHRM, health care benefits are particularly important to attracting and retaining staff. However, the transition to the D.C. exchange has made it difficult for some district-based staff to find local health care providers who accept the D.C. options. Thus, the Committee recommends eliminating the requirement of district staff to purchase health insurance on the district exchange. This change would bring D.C. based staff into alignment with committee staff and the executive branch when it comes to health provider choices. It would also provide district staff with local health insurance options by allowing them to opt into local systems.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Staff**

### 3.12. Student Loans

*Provide more financial stability for congressional staff enrolled in the federal student loan program.*

Reauthorize appropriate provisions included in the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) related to the tax treatment of the student loan repayment program. While staff benefits are provided by all Members of Congress, the stipulations of these requirements can differ by office. The Committee recommends that Congress extend the provision in the CARES Act that allowed student loan borrowers to skip payments for six months and avoid taxes on the benefits they receive.

**Stakeholder(s):**  
**Congressional Staff**

### 3.13. Staff Pay

*Staff pay should be delinked from Member pay and a new cap specific to staff should be established.*

Retaining senior staff is critical to improving institutional capacity and making Members more effective lawmakers on behalf of their constituents. However, congressional staff salaries are limited by a Member's own salary. Members of the Committee recommend delinking their own salaries from those of their staff, so they can reward and retain their most senior employees.

**Stakeholder(s):**  
**Congressional Staff**

### 3.14. Member Organizations

*Allow Congressional Member Organizations to access benefits and hire one intern to help support their work.*

Standardize Eligible Congressional Member Organizations (ECMOs) to participate in the House's paid intern program and access staff benefits like the student loan repayment program. Like congressional party caucuses, Member organizations rely on staff and interns to help them serve their Members and work on their organizational legislative objectives. This recommendation ensures that staff who work for these organizations can access the same staff benefits as staff who work in personal offices. It also allows ECMOs to participate in the House's paid internship program, granting them 1 paid intern at a time.

**Stakeholder(s):**  
**Congressional Member Organizations**

### 3.15. Capitol Complex

*Identify areas in the U.S. Capitol Complex that could benefit from architectural modernization.*

Congress' physical workspace is another factor that affects the institution's ability to attract and retain talented, young workers. Members also complain about a lack of open, bipartisan spaces where they can meet in private, away from press. While the Committee passed a recommendation encouraging a bipartisan space near the House Floor to meet with Members across the aisle, staff too, desire bipartisan spaces to work together.

**Stakeholder(s):**  
**Architect of the Capitol :**  
*The Architect of the Capitol should evaluate the use of space in the U.S. Capitol Complex and identify opportunities for modernization.*

### 3.16. District Office Leases

*Develop a practice of negotiating House district office leases to lower costs, improve consistency of rental rates and save taxpayer dollars.*

Similar to efforts currently underway, the Committee on House Administration and the Government Services Administration (GSA) should develop a practice of negotiating an MOU covering leases for House district offices with the goal of lowering costs, improving consistency of rental rates, and guaranteeing House offices are offered the lowest available rates in GSA buildings and receive tenant protections and benefits in line with the Senate.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**GSA :**

*... unlike individual Members of Congress, GSA has a great deal of expertise in this area. Today, the GSA owns and leases nearly 400 million square feet of space throughout the country, from ports of entry, post offices, laboratories, and more. Allowing the GSA to handle the responsibility of negotiating the*

*lease for individual Member's district offices would save time and money. This change would result also in more time for Members and staff to work on constituent services and could create additional funding within the MRA that could be used to compensate staff.*

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## 4. Onboarding & Education

### *OVERHAUL THE ONBOARDING PROCESS AND PROVIDE CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR MEMBERS*

#### **Stakeholder(s)**

#### **Members of Congress**

Ensuring that Members are provided with tools to succeed from the get-go, as well as opportunities for continued growth throughout their tenure, will ultimately make them more effective legislators on behalf of the American people. The goal of setting up newly elected Members for success can be achieved through reforms to the onboarding and orientation process that help ease the transition. A “just-in-time” approach to training ensures that freshman Members receive crucial information when they need it most. The orientation process should also emphasize the core values of civility and collaboration—division of freshman Members by party should be avoided or kept to a minimum in favor of a bipartisan experience. And opportunities to learn shouldn’t stop after a Representative’s first year in Congress. The institution, and the people it serves, evolve as outside events shift the policy agenda—and Members should be able to adapt and evolve, too. By encouraging access to professional development resources and training, and requiring updated training for an increasingly technological world, Members can continue to learn and in turn, better represent the people who elected them to serve.

#### **4.1. Transition Staff**

*Allow newly-elected Members to hire and pay one transition staff member.*

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **Newly-Elected Members of Congress**

*transition staff member for the duration of the time between when they are elected and sworn in.*

#### **Office of the Clerk :**

*Through the Office of the Clerk, newly-elected Members should have the option to hire and pay one*

#### **4.2. Nonpartisan Orientation**

*Offer new-Member orientation in a nonpartisan way.*

Orientation courses and services should be available to all new Members (including those incoming from a special election) and presented in a nonpartisan way... the Committee recommended that: orientation courses and services should be available to all new Members (including those incoming from a special election) and presented in a nonpartisan way. The Committee specified that orientation sessions should be video-recorded and made easily accessible year-round in an electronic format so that Members can access them at their convenience.

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **Newly-Elected Members of Congress**

### 4.3. Orientation Scope

*Make new-Member orientation more comprehensive.*

The Committee agreed that the House's current approach to orientation should be reimagined and reorganized to offer a "just-in-time" training process that provides ongoing training and coaching to freshman Members throughout their first year in office. This change will provide far greater support to freshman Members and their staff, improve the performance of freshman offices and significantly reduce the amount of time that Members-elect need to spend attending out-of-town orientation programs.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Newly-Elected Members of Congress**

### 4.4. Civility

*Promote civility during new-Member orientation.*

Offer a course in the new Member orientation and ongoing education portal to instruct Members on the House Rules of Decorum and Debate, and other practices to promote civility and respect. Americans expect and deserve a functioning Legislative Branch, yet too often partisanship slows the work of Congress. In addition to presenting programming in a nonpartisan way (see Recommendation 2 above), new Member orientation should include a session on House Rules of Decorum and Debate and other practices to promote civility in Congress. This would help establish the importance of a civil and productive tone for new Members and promote relationship building across the aisle.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Newly-Elected Members of Congress**

### 4.5. Leadership Academy

*Create a Congressional Leadership Academy to offer training for Members.*

... the Committee recommends creating a pilot Congressional Leadership Academy for Members which offers professional development and institutional training. Alongside in-person training opportunities, seminars and other forums for learning should be made easily available online.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Members of Congress**

### 4.6. Cybersecurity Training

*Make cybersecurity training mandatory for Members.*

The Committee recommended making cybersecurity training mandatory for Members, and specifically called for advanced cyber-hygiene training and use of encrypted messaging and multi-factor authentication as basic standards for both Members and staff. Due to the increase in remote work during the coronavirus pandemic, this recommendation was further expanded upon in the Committee's fourth round of recommendations addressing continuity issues in the legislative branch.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Members of Congress**

## 5. Accessibility

### MAKE THE HOUSE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AMERICANS

#### Stakeholder(s)

##### Americans

##### Individuals with Disabilities

The recommendations outlined in this chapter are consistent with the Committee's mission to both modernize and make Congress work better on behalf of all American people. A modern Congress works for, and is accessible to, individuals with disabilities. The Committee recognizes that the Capitol complex includes historic buildings that present unique challenges when it comes to meeting modern accessibility standards, and these upgrades will require engineered solutions that will undoubtedly take time. Thus, the Committee supports immediate remedial action once barriers are identified. Other corrective actions rely on technology that is widely available and extensively used outside of Congress. Making websites digitally accessible and providing real-time closed captioning, for example, are a matter of investing in and prioritizing technologies that equalize access. Although the ADA became law 30 years ago, Americans with disabilities continue to fight for equal access under the law. As one of the most visible "places of public accommodation" covered by the ADA, Congress needs fulfill its obligations so that all Americans are equally able to work for, access, or visit the U.S. Capitol and connect with their representatives at all stages of policy making.

#### 5.1. Websites

*Improve access to congressional websites for individuals with disabilities.*

Scan and analyze all House websites and apps to determine the accessibility level of each congressional website, and provide resources and assistance to ensure all systems are compatible with common programs used by major disability groups. The "People's House" should be accessible to all people. Having a disability shouldn't preclude constituents from having full access (physical, electronic, etc.) to their Representatives' offices. Many congressional websites are currently not accessible to people with disabilities. This lack of accessibility prevents some constituents from obtaining public information about Members, legislation, district-based issues, as well as job and internship openings. The Committee recommends addressing this inequality of access by directing the CAO and HIR to scan and develop a plan to promptly maximize website accessibility. Prompt execution of such a plan will ensure that all constituents, regardless of ability, can access public information about their Representatives.

#### 5.2. Broadcasts

*Require all broadcasts of House proceedings to provide closed caption service.*

Require all House proceedings that are broadcast on TV or streamed on the internet to provide closed caption services and provide a free captioning service for all web videos created by MCL offices... the Committee recommends that all House proceedings that are broadcast on TV or streamed on the internet be required to provide closed caption services. The Committee also recommends the CAO purchase and provide a free captioning service for all web videos created by member, committee, and leadership offices.

#### 5.3. Capitol Complex

*Require a review of the Capitol complex to determine accessibility challenges for individuals with disabilities.*

Require a comprehensive review of the Capitol grounds to determine accessibility challenges for individuals with disabilities conducted by the Architect of the Capitol, Sergeant at Arms, and the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights and implement a remediation plan... The Capitol grounds should be accessible to all individuals, regardless of ability. After gathering feedback from various disability groups, the Committee determined that a broad review of the Capitol grounds was necessary to determine accessibility challenges. A

comprehensive plan should be developed and implemented to ensure that persons with disabilities can access all buildings and spaces in the Capitol complex. Thus, the Committee requires a comprehensive review of the Capitol grounds to determine accessibility challenges for individuals with disabilities conducted by the Architect of the Capitol, Sergeant at Arms, and the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights and implementation of a remediation plan. More specifically, the Committee recommends that the AOC, the Sergeant at Arms, and the OCWR should ensure that persons with disabilities are able to easily access the Capitol grounds. A comprehensive review was seen as a first step toward determining areas that are not currently accessible, followed by a plan for making any identified accessibility modifications.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Architect of the Capitol**

**Sergeant at Arms**

**Office of Congressional Workplace Rights**

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## 6. Technology

### MODERNIZE AND REVITALIZE HOUSE TECHNOLOGY

#### Stakeholder(s)

#### U.S. House of Representatives

While Congress will undoubtedly continue to face challenges of “the Pacing Problem” given the nature of the institution, the reforms outlined in this chapter usher in a new era of technology in the House. The recommendations outlined in this chapter not only will save taxpayer dollars, but free Members and their staff to spend more time doing what they came to Congress to do: work for the American people. The Committee worked to make it easier for every office to have access to updated technology, IT assistance, and outside vendors. By rethinking and rebranding the OTA, and bolstering the existing practices of HIR, the burden of technology procurement and management will be lifted from individual offices and will implement new practices to ensure Congress does not fall behind. These reforms are not a one-size-fits-all approach to technology. They specifically create opportunities for Members to continue to innovate on their own if desired, allowing individual offices to lead the way with creativity and new ideas. This flexibility is key to both improving technology in the House and ensuring that every Member has access to the technology necessary to succeed. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the remote-work period that ensued, ushered in several of these recommendations, but there is still room for improvement. Passage of H.Res.756 in the House, which contains the majority of these recommendations, is an uplifting sign that these recommendations will usher in a new era of more efficient and effective lawmaking.

#### 6.1. OTA

*Reestablish and restructure an improved Office of Technology Assessment.*

Reestablish an improved Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to study and recommend emerging technologies, provide nonpartisan information and policy analysis to Member offices, support legislative branch agencies in their examination of new technologies, focus on general oversight and policy, and facilitate peer reviews of potential new technologies... the Committee re-envisioned the OTA to be more responsive to the needs of Members, cost-effective, efficient, and proactive in addressing the technological needs of Congress. The Committee first, recommends reinstating the OTA but renaming it to the “Congressional Technology and Innovation Lab.” This Lab would be charged with going beyond the mandate of the original OTA, proactively studying and testing new technologies rather than waiting for directives to study technologies, as the former OTA did. The Committee recommends the Lab employ nonpartisan experts, visiting professors, and graduate students from premier companies, national labs, and institutions across the country. The Lab should work with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and HIR to share results with Member, committee, and leadership offices. Not only would the Lab provide fresh, invigorated tech policy analysis and advice, it would lift a great burden off Members and their staff, as well as other support organizations like CRS.

#### Stakeholder(s):

#### Office of Technology Assessment

#### 6.2. IT services

*Improve IT services in the House by reforming House Information Resources (HIR).*

Reform House Information Resources (HIR) by partnering with outside entities to develop a roadmap for addressing the root cause of HIR’s systemic inability to deliver enterprise programs and IT services in a timely manner... The Committee recommends that HIR partner with outside entities to develop a roadmap for improving wait times for services. An entity outside of the House should be contracted to review the current operations of HIR and provide a roadmap to successful reform. Specifically, the House should partner with GAO, the new OTA, the GSA’s 18F office, the United States Digital Service (USDS), and others to develop this roadmap, with a specific eye towards improving HIR’s IT services and website design. Not only would this

eliminate the all-too-common practice of double-spending on IT services, thereby reducing duplicative spending; it will make it easier for Member offices to receive IT assistance.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**House Information Resources (HIR)**

### 6.3. Technological Improvements

*Require HIR to prioritize certain technological improvements.*

Require HIR to prioritize certain technology projects, as soon as predictably possible, including video calls, e-signatures, VPN access, and the ability to upload casework and requests digitally... In addition to a larger restructuring of HIR's IT and website services, the Modernization Committee recommends that HIR immediately prioritize several specific projects. These four specific and simple changes will streamline everyday tasks for Member offices, particularly for constituent engagement and casework. Many of these reforms were identified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that saw many Members and staff operating remotely for months.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**HIR**

#### 6.3.1. Video Meetings

*Develop a reliable mechanism for video meetings*

First, the Committee recommends that HIR develop a reliable mechanism for video meetings. The House adopted WebEx in response to the sudden need for the entire Congress to telework amid the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Committee has urged HIR to continue to develop easier access to this and other products.

#### 6.3.2. E-Signatures

*Enable secure e-signatures for letters, bills, and constituent consent forms*

Second, the Committee recommends that in conjunction with the Clerk's office, secure e-signatures should be allowed for letters, bills, and constituent consent forms. The need for this became even more apparent during the remote operating status, and the Committee passed additional recommendations to push for a permanent expansion of secure e-signatures. This would include working with the Clerk on the development of the platform for facilitating e-signatures, including changing the rules of the House to allow e-signatures on letters and legislation.

#### 6.3.3. VPN & Security Guidelines

*Set up a VPN on all devices and develop relevant security guidelines*

Third, the Committee recommends that HIR set up a VPN on all devices and develop relevant security guidelines. This recommendation should be familiar to any current staff member in Congress—but is essential to ensuring Members and staff are logging on to their official devices in a secure and safe way.

### 6.3.4. Casework & Service Requests

*Develop a way for constituents to upload casework and other service requests digitally through Members' websites*

Lastly, the Committee recommends that HIR develop a way for constituents to upload casework and other service requests digitally through a Member's website. Currently, constituents must submit forms through the mail, or via fax—a problem that was only exacerbated for staff and constituents alike during the COVID-19 pandemic. By making it easier for constituents to submit information, Congress will be able to address casework and constituent concerns more efficiently and effectively.

### 6.4. Outside Technology

*Require HIR to reform the approval process for outside technology vendors.*

Require HIR to create an approval process for outside vendors developing new technologies that is transparent, scheduled, and timely. In addition to changes to HIR's internal operations, the Committee also recommends HIR revamp its process for approving outside vendors. Currently, the process to hire an outside vendor for an office website, hardware, software, or other equipment is time consuming, bureaucratic, and confusing. These delays often discourage vendors and prevent House Members from hiring the vendor of their choice. The Committee recommends that HIR create a more inviting approval process for vendors who seek to offer innovative technology to the House.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**HIR**

**Technology Vendors**

### 6.5. Technology Testing

*Require HIR to allow Member offices to test new technology.*

HIR should create a program that allows Member offices to opt-in to beta test with new technologies. Members and their staff need to be able to experiment with technology that will familiarize them with possible new services (and the vendors that provide them) in the first place. It's important for congressional offices to be using the same types of technologies that their constituencies use and rely on to communicate. The complex rules HIR places on individual offices ultimately limits opportunities for offices to test new technologies. Through a new centralized HIR, Members should be given both the freedom and responsibility to experiment with new technology. Every district is different, and every Member should have the opportunity to use tools that best aid their district. The Committee recommends that offices wishing to beta-test new technologies be able to easily identify and sign up for opportunities to do so. Member offices should also acknowledge the responsibility of the risks associated with such testing, as the security of the House enterprise is paramount.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**HIR**

### 6.6. POCs

*Create one point of contact for technology services for each Member office within HIR who would be responsible for all technology points of contact.*

Create one point of contact for technology services for each Member office within HIR who would be responsible for all technology points of contact, including technology, telecom, web, district office technologies, and more. To make HIR more accessible and customer-service oriented, the Committee recommends HIR establish one point of contact for each Member office. This recommendation is adopted from a well-known private business approach in which a customer service representative serves as a point of contact for individual

customers. The point of contact would be responsible for all technology questions, including telecom, web, and district office technologies. Given the vast scope of HIR, establishing a singular, consistent point of contact for individual offices will make it easier for Members and staff to request assistance, and establishes a relationship between HIR and individual offices.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**HIR**

**Congressional Offices**

## 6.7. Customer Satisfaction

*Create a customer satisfaction portal on HouseNet that allows Member and staff to rate and review outside vendors and HIR services.*

In order to continually improve beyond these specific recommendations for upgrading HIR, the Committee recommends establishing a new customer service portal for staff to review the services and assistance they receive from HIR. Right now, Members and staff make technology decisions based on word of mouth or vendor outreach. This system does not empower individual offices to make the best decisions for their districts. A customer service portal would serve as a resource where all Members could access in-depth information about technology or request direct assistance. In addition, a formal, annual survey to measure staff satisfaction with HIR will increase accountability and provide helpful feedback to consistently improve. This survey should also include questions geared toward district staff and district-specific technology concerns, as well as information on the technologies that Members and staff would like to use but have not yet received HIR approval. This feedback will help HIR to improve over time, and reduce miscommunication between Member offices and HIR.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Members of Congress**

**Vendors**

**Congressional Staff**

**HIR**

## 6.8. Bulk Purchasing

*Leverage the bulk purchasing power of the House and provide a standard suite of quality, up-to-date devices and software.*

The CAO should leverage the bulk purchasing power of the House and provide a standard suite of quality, up-to-date devices and software, such as desktop and laptop computers, tablets, printers, mobile phones and desk phones at no cost to the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA). Beyond improvements to HIR, the Committee also recommends a significant change to the acquisition process for new technology in the House of Representatives. As recommended in Chapter 3 (Streamlining Member services), the CAO should leverage the bulk purchasing power of the House and provide a standard suite of quality, up-to-date devices and software, such as desktop and laptop computers, tablets, printers, phones, and software. Additionally, the cost of these purchases should not come out of the MRA, but be paid out of a centralized account.

## 6.9. Fact Sheets

*The Congressional Research Service (CRS) should prioritize a "rapid response" program for nonpartisan fact sheets on key issues and legislation under consideration in Congress.*

The Committee recommends that CRS proactively identify, prepare and prioritize nonpartisan fact sheets for key issues and legislation expected to be under consideration in Congress, rather than waiting to receive multiple requests from Member offices before responding and providing the information. By proactively preparing fact sheets on timely policy issues, CRS can better prepare Members and their staff for current, pressing issues in advance. In addition to Members and staff, constituents would also have timely access to this nonpartisan, factual information, helping to elevate and improve debate in the House.

**Stakeholder(s):****Congressional Research Service (CRS) :**

*The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is an essential source for nonpartisan policy information. Members and their staff may request memos on nearly any topic—from a specific policy to legislative*

*procedure. This information is then used to inform Members' voting decisions, craft legislative text, and educate constituents. However, this high-quality information can be slow in delivery.*

**6.10. Engagement & Services**

*Develop a nonpartisan constituent engagement and services best practices page on HouseNet.*

To collect and centralize the information recommended in this chapter, the Committee recommends developing a nonpartisan constituent engagement and best services page on HouseNet. Currently, Members—particularly new Members—are reliant on word of mouth for information on best practices and technology advice. As a result, Members are left re-inventing the wheel. Instead of relying on the organic, anecdotal sharing of best practices, Members should be set up for success from the beginning. This website could serve as an organized portal for HIR (surveys, best practices, technology updates), outside vendors (how to apply as an approved vendor), and Member offices (contact information, CRS fact sheets, constituent outreach, digital communications and franking updates, and in-person training events). Making this information easily accessible would help promote easier communication between HIR, outside vendors, and individual offices. These topics were chosen because they are common, and often similar, across all districts, making best practices easy to adopt and apply.

**Stakeholder(s):****Congressional Constituents****6.11. Digital Services**

*Establish a Congressional Digital Services Task Force.*

The House should direct the establishment of a Congressional Digital Services Task Force to examine the need for and role of a specialized group of technologists, designers, and others to support the House's internal and public facing operations. Congressional operations depend upon technology, but Congress is often constrained by its own limited approach to purchasing technology and providing technological services. The executive branch responded to similar challenges by creating the U.S. Digital Service, which hires technologists to build tools that make government work better for the American people. A more sophisticated and coordinated approach to the provision of technology and technological services in the House would help members better serve their constituents. For example, a Congressional Digital Services Office could develop more modern and streamlined technologies for congressional offices to interface with constituents and manage their questions and requests. The Committee recommends the Task Force fall under the umbrella of the newly restructured OTA (Recommendation 1).

**6.12. Congressional Data**

*Make permanent the Bulk Data Task Force and rename it the Congressional Data Task Force.*

Congress established the Bulk Data Task Force with a focus on the question of determining whether Congress should make the data behind THOMAS and LIS available to the public as structured data. Ultimately the Task Force recommended, and GPO implemented the publication of bill summary, status, and text information online as structured data. In this sense, the Task Force completed its intended mission. However, in completing its mission, the Task Force brought together many of the technology stakeholders inside the legislative branch as well as members of civil society and continues to hold public meetings on a quarterly basis. This ongoing collaboration has been positive for the Clerk's Office and for data transparency groups, ultimately leading to technological advances in how legislative data is made public. The Committee recommends the Task Force's

mission expand beyond publishing bills and the data attendant to them to allow for consideration of other legislative documents and congressional operations data. The Task Force should be renamed the Congressional Data Task Force to accurately capture the Task Force's expanded mission.

DEMONSTRATION ONLY

## 7. Processes

### STREAMLINE PROCESSES AND SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS

#### Stakeholder(s)

##### Taxpayers

The recommendations described in this chapter aim to push the House to evolve its administrative practices and adopt modern approaches to solving day-to-day operational challenges. Unlike the executive branch, the House has unique organizational challenges that impede efficiency, because as an institution it values direct constituent representation over efficiency. But there is room for improvement. The House has made many reforms over the past decade that improve administrative efficiencies and can modernize further if encouraged to do so... These recommendations were developed with the Member autonomy in mind—ensuring that Members can still operate an individual office but removing unnecessary administrative burdens, saving them time and taxpayer dollars. Ultimately, these reforms will help the House spend less on administrative resources and more on the constituent and legislative work that Members came to Washington to do in the first place.

#### 7.1. Bill Cosponsorship

*Update House procedures to allow members to electronically add or remove their name as a bill cosponsor.*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, House Administration Chair Zoe Lofgren and Ranking Member Rodney Davis consulted with the Rules Committee, House Clerk, and Parliamentarian's office to permit electronic submissions for legislative documents, including co-sponsorship of legislation. These electronic submissions will continue to be accepted during the public health emergency. The Committee recommends that this change be made permanent and the House update its procedures to allow Members to electronically add or remove their name as a bill cosponsor. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the House Clerk and the Parliamentarian identify a more efficient way for Members who were added in error as a cosponsor of a bill to remove themselves as cosponsors of legislation without indicating their previous co-sponsorship.

#### 7.2. Emergency Preparedness

*Require Members to undergo emergency preparedness training.*

Require Members to undergo emergency preparedness training to ensure our government is fully prepared in the event of a crisis. Administrative inefficiencies go beyond concerns of time and resources. Currently, the onboarding process for Members and their staff is decentralized and inconsistent. While emergency preparedness is mandatory for staff, Members are not required to undergo training. This inconsistency across offices presents safety and security concerns, as well as inefficiencies of time and communication. While these security concerns are expanded upon in the chapter on congressional continuity (see Chapter 9), the Committee also recommends a streamlined emergency preparedness training to improve administrative efficiency. Specifically, the Committee recommends that Members undergo mandatory emergency preparedness training for all Members. In addition, the Committee recommends the House Sergeant at Arms Office and the Capitol Police coordinate periodic emergency preparedness training for Members.

#### Stakeholder(s):

##### Members of Congress

#### 7.3. Purchasing

*Identify ways the House and Senate can streamline purchases and save taxpayer dollars.*

... the Committee recommended the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the Senate Rules Committee, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms explore how the House and Senate can collaborate on procurement and bulk

purchasing to save money for the American people. This recommendation was successfully passed by the House and later adopted into the FY 2021 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)**

**Senate Sergeant at Arms**

**Senate Rules Committee**

#### 7.4. Bulk Purchasing

*Encourage House-wide bulk purchasing of goods and services.*

Encourage House-wide bulk purchasing of goods and services to cut back on waste and inefficiency... The Committee recommends that the CAO be granted the ability to negotiate House-wide contracts or purchasing services for member, committee, and leadership offices, with the goal of saving taxpayer dollars by purchasing centrally rather than independently. Building on previous recommendations, the Committee recommends the CAO, under the supervision of the Committee on House Administration, determine a standard baseline technology package for Member, committee, and leadership offices. The Committee recommends that the standard technology package be piloted with new Members at the beginning of the incoming Congress and expanded accordingly.

#### 7.5. Travel Expenditures

*Update travel expenditure policies.*

Update travel expenditure policies to improve efficiencies, and boost accountability and transparency... The Committee recommends expanding the House Travel Card Program to make tracking House expenditures or expediting employee reimbursement more efficient and less time-consuming. This would have an added benefit for junior staff who may find it difficult to float travel expenses from personal resources. In response to public transportation concerns amid the Coronavirus pandemic, the Committee on House Administration allowed ridesharing services to be reimbursed for congressional staff. The Committee recommends that this program be continued, and that the House Travel Card Program be modernized to accommodate current forms of travel, such as ridesharing services.

## 8. Constituent Communications

### *INCREASE THE QUALITY OF CONSTITUENT COMMUNICATION*

#### Stakeholder(s)

##### **Congressional Constituents**

The recommendations outlined in this chapter are commonsense reforms that were crafted in close consultation with leadership from the House Communication Standards Commission and the Committee on House Administration to provide Congress and the public with guidance on how to communicate more efficiently and effectively. By renaming and clarifying the jurisdiction of the Commission to include social media, Members and constituents alike will have much-needed clarity on how these accounts are expected to operate. In addition, technological updates to the franking process itself will provide greater transparency and efficiency for constituents—allowing them to truly interact with their representatives, generating meaningful conversation beyond scripted petitions. The recommendations presented in this chapter offer a much-needed update to current operating procedures, but also set the stage for continued growth and improvement in constituent communications.

#### 8.1. Member Office Communications

*Consolidate the regulations governing Member office communications.*

Consolidate the regulations governing Member office communications, including digital communications, into one easy to find place... The Committee recommended updating the U.S. Code to consolidate all member communications—including social media—under the jurisdiction of the Communication Standards Commission. This recommendation has fully been implemented in the House, and a new manual with updated regulations was issued to House Members in January 2020... This change in jurisdiction provides Members of Congress with much-needed clarity on how to communicate with their constituents on social media and other emerging forms of technology.

#### Stakeholder(s):

##### **Communication Standards Commission :**

*The bipartisan makeup of the Commission makes it an ideal body to issue social media regulations that can be accepted by both political parties regardless of*

*minority or majority status. Giving the Commission the necessary jurisdiction over social media will allow it to establish official regulations to guide Members on their social media use.*

#### 8.2. Communications Standards

*Rename the House Commission on Mailing Standards as the House Communications Standards Commission.*

Rename the House Commission on Mailing Standards, also known as the Franking Commission, the House Communications Standards Commission to reflect 21st Century communications. Given the vast jurisdiction of the Commission, including email, advertisements, robocall scripts, text messages, websites, and the new inclusion of social media, the Committee recommended that the title of the Franking Commission be changed to reflect its modern responsibilities. This recommendation is currently underway in the House, and branding and operations are now referred to the House Communication Standards Commission.

#### Stakeholder(s):

##### **House Commission on Mailing Standards :**

*also known as the Franking Commission*

### 8.3. Constituent Communications

*Increase opportunities for constituents to communicate with their Representatives.*

... the Committee suggested two changes to improve constituency communication by allowing sustained, multiple communications.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Constituents**

#### 8.3.1. Issue Updates

*Allow Members to provide updates on issues*

First, the franking privilege should be modernized to allow Members to provide updates on issues they have already communicated on without requiring approval from the Franking Commission. The Commission should establish how this sustained communication is regulated.

#### 8.3.2. Communication Means

*Make it easier to communicate with Members using the means constituents prefer*

Second, the method of communication should make it easier to communicate with Members. Currently, Members can communicate easily with constituents who have willingly opted-in to e-newsletters without review from the Commission. This privilege should be expanded to other forms of communications, including text messages and phone calls. Members should be able to communicate with constituents in the mode that constituents prefer. The Committee and Commission suggested that the ability to quickly communicate with constituents, without the step of a Commission review, should be updated to include other forms of communications beyond subscription email. This recommendation is currently in place, as new regulations now permit unsolicited follow-up communication.

### 8.4. Mail

*Increase accountability and tracking for all Member-sponsored communications mail.*

The Committee recommended that the automated tracking system be modernized in consultation with the USPS to include franked mail from district offices. Modernizing this process would make tracking easier and more reliable, and will further increase accountability of Members to their constituents. The Commission is encouraged to pursue alternatives for the reporting process. For example, Chair Susan Davis has suggested the USPS scan and automatically tally the unique barcode on each piece of mail sent from district offices, as is currently done for Washington, D.C.-initiated mail.

### 8.5. Correspondence

*Allow for faster correspondence between Representatives and their constituents.*

To ensure efficient communication with constituents, but still maintain a quality review process, the Committee recommended updating the approval process to better reflect modern forms of communication... The Committee recommended that the Commission take into consideration the medium, size and reach of the mailing when reviewing franked mail. Digital mail, like email and social media for example, should be subjected to an alternate, quicker review process. The approval process needed to better reflect modern forms of communications and improve Members' ability to quickly communicate with those they represent. This recommendation

has also been implemented, as mass emails and advertisements under \$500 no longer require an advisory opinion.

## 8.6. Social Media

*Update House social media rules.*

Update House social media rules to allow for better communication online between newly-elected Members of Congress and their followers... The Committee and the Commission recommended that Members be allowed a one-time transfer of followers from their campaign to their official social media accounts at the beginning of each Congress. This will allow Members to clearly communicate with their constituents at the start of their term, so constituents can follow their new account for legislative updates. The Committee recommended that the Commission clarify the rules that govern social media accounts to further reiterate this recommendation. By placing social media accounts under the jurisdiction of the Commission, rules and regulations of social media will be easier to find and understand.

## 8.7. Public Access

*Allow the public to better access and view the types of communication sent by Members of Congress to their constituents.*

... while Congress has significantly cut down on the cost of franked mail, the franking process is still not transparent to constituents, or to Members of Congress. For the public to view Commission advisory opinions, current rules require individuals to make a trip to the Clerk's Office in Washington, D.C., provide identification, and pay for copies of materials sent by Members to their constituents. This is a costly inconvenience for constituents and presents serious issues of access, accountability, and transparency. The Committee recommended that the advisory opinions made by the Commission be posted online, in a modern and accessible form. It's essential for constituents to not only be able to communicate with their representatives; they should know the process and understand the legitimacy of these official communications as well. At the time of writing, this recommendation has been partially implemented. There is now a live, public-facing website where anyone can search approved communications by any House Member at any time. The self-reporting feature of the portal is still under construction.

## 9. COOP

### CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

The 13 continuity recommendations discussed in this chapter reflect the Committee's focus on making Congress work better for the American people, no matter the circumstances. The health, safety, and economic challenges Americans experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic made clear that during a crisis, Congress needs to be prepared to continue serving the people. Consistent with the committee's mandate, these recommendations focus on bolstering the House's institutional capacity to more seamlessly adapt and respond to emergency scenarios... These recommendations are a first step in helping Congress better prepare for continuity of government, no matter the circumstances. Future work should consider a more thorough analysis of continuity of operations in Congress and the chain of federal command under crisis.

#### 9.1. Plan

*Each office should have a continuity of operations plan.*

Each office should have a continuity of operations plan, including minimum safety requirements and an emergency communications plan, that is made available to all staff so offices continue functioning for the public. Office COOPs should include detailed emergency communication plans for office staff that explain how staff will communicate, phone forwarding plans, email management, and video conferencing systems. For new Members, these plans should be developed during orientation; for current Members, these plans should be developed at the beginning of the next congressional session. Plans should be included in employee handbooks and made easily accessible to all staff. District office handbooks could include information on how to transition to remote work, including for phone and computer operations. Additionally, District Directors should be consulted during the development of COOPs to ensure that district offices have a telework policy in place.

#### 9.2. Technology & Equipment

*Ensure that staff have the most up-to-date technology and equipment to continue effectively working on behalf of constituents in the event of a disruption or emergency.*

The Committee recommends that office COOP and technology purchasing plans provide for up-to-date, VPN-capable laptops for all staff in both Washington, D.C. and district offices, as well as equipment and support necessary to forward D.C. and district-office phones. The House should also consider purchasing secure Wi-Fi connections or "hot spots" for increased connectivity during remote work periods, particularly in districts with poor connectivity. Telework technology in district offices should include tools necessary for continued communication with constituents, including phones and scanners.

##### Stakeholder(s):

##### Sergeant at Arms :

*To ease this process, an Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), the HR HUB, and the Sergeant at Arms'*

*Emergency Management Division should assist new Members and staff who request help with technology purchases during the orientation process.*

#### 9.3. Technology Maintenance

*Establish regular maintenance plans for office technology, so the equipment and technology needed during remote operations and telework is functional.*

The Committee recommends that OTA, in consultation with the HR HUB and the Sergeant at Arms' Emergency Management Division where appropriate, assist Members with the maintenance of their office technology systems. Additionally, the OTA should establish a technology maintenance checklist for individual offices to reference.

**Stakeholder(s):****Sergeant at Arms****9.4. Crisis Communications**

*Crisis communications guidelines for constituent communication should be approved and shared with all Member offices.*

Crisis communications guidelines for constituent communication, including outreach plans for extended telework periods, should be approved and shared with all Member offices.

**Stakeholder(s):****Congressional Constituents****House Communication Standards****Commission :**

*The House Communication Standards Commission should outline an expedited review process, as well as crisis-specific sample text for offices to reference. In*

*particular, the Commission should consider exceptions to current “blackout dates” to allow Members to communicate emergency information to their constituents.*

**9.5. Documents, Forms & Templates**

*Implement a document management system and provide digital forms and templates for public access.*

To help streamline casework requests and help constituents better access federal agencies and resources, the House should implement a secure document management system, and provide digital forms and templates for public access. Offices must be able to handle constituent casework remotely and securely. When a crisis requires staff to work remotely for an extended period, staff must be able to securely and seamlessly access and process constituent casework. A House-wide secure document-sharing system would ease this process, as would the provision of digital forms and templates for district casework. Such a system will prevent personal information from being insecurely shared via email. All offices should also have a digital checkoff on privacy release forms allowing them to seamlessly transfer constituent cases to their successors.

**9.6. Telework**

*Prioritize the approval of platforms that staff need for effective telework.*

The House should prioritize the approval of platforms that staff need for effective telework, and each individual staff member should have licensed access to the approved technology. The Committee recommends that HIR and OTA prioritize software licenses and updates reflective of congressional needs. Building off of recommendations to streamline congressional purchases to save taxpayer dollars, the House should also consider bulk purchases of software licenses. HIR and OTA should also evaluate hardware updates to facilitate software improvements; this could take the form of an “approved hardware catalogue” that advises offices on which machines to buy.

**9.7. Telework**

*Committees should establish telework policies on a bipartisan basis.*

Transparency in the legislative process is hindered during extended periods of telework due to fewer public committee markups and slowdowns in agency response to committee requests for information. Committees should have audio and video communications programs in place, as well as a bipartisan plan for sharing relevant committee information with the public. Committees should evaluate current needs of committee rooms to

achieve remote capabilities. Additionally, committees should establish bipartisan telework policies that detail how information will be recorded, stored, and shared electronically with the public. Committees should be given flexibility to customize bipartisan plans that work for their Members. These plans should also include an outline for external communication with federal agencies, so that committees are prepared to continue conducting oversight and hold agencies in their jurisdiction accountable during telework periods. Committees could also consider remote voting opportunities, expounded on elsewhere in this report, to make committee activity more efficient and transparent.

## 9.8. Committee Reports

*The House should make permanent the option to electronically submit committee reports.*

A pilot program to allow committees to electronically submit committee reports was put into place in May 2020 via H.Res.965.237 The program was intended to be temporary, in response to the COVID-19 telework requirements. But because the electronic submission of committee reports has been shown to make committee work more efficient, accessible, and transparent, the Committee recommends that the House make the pilot program permanent. While committees would not be required to submit reports electronically, all committees should have the option to do so, regardless of whether the committee is teleworking or working in person.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Committees**

## 68. Digital Signatures

*Expand the use of digital signatures.*

Expand the use of digital signatures for a majority of House business, including constituent communications. The Committee previously passed a recommendation to allow Members to electronically add or remove their name as a bill cosponsor, thereby updating a cumbersome process. This technology should be expanded to allow digital signatures on other documents to increase efficiency, and to allow Members to designate a staff Member who can approve use of a Member's digital signature. Additionally, the House should support the Committee on House Administration's efforts to create a centralized website for the online submission and acceptance of digital signatures.

## 9.10. Technology Plans

*Committees should develop bipartisan plans on how technology and innovative platforms can be best incorporated into daily work.*

While some committees have introduced technology into processes to make work more efficient, most committees have not. For example, committees could save time by voting electronically, especially during long markups with a lot of amendments. Using tablets for document sharing in committee also saves time, as well as paper. Upgrades should also allow Members to plug in their own devices at the dais. Once initial infrastructure and security needs are understood, the House as a whole should consider allowing Members to use personal tablets for their committee work.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Committees**

## 9.11. COVID-19 Lessons Learned

*Identify lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and recommend continuity of Congress improvements.*

A bipartisan, bicameral task force should identify lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and recommend continuity of Congress improvements. The Committee has recommended specific continuity of governance and operations reforms, but there is a need for a wholistic understanding of how Congress responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and how the institution can better prepare for future crises. A bipartisan, bicameral task force should produce an updated, objective report of the response and offer recommendations for how Congress can best prepare for congressional continuity. When making recommendations, the task force should consider how other legislatures (such as state legislatures and foreign governments) responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and extended telework periods. This should also go beyond physical and technical reforms, and consider actual continuity of government leadership, similar to goal of the 9/11 Commission.

## 9.12. Continuity, Telework & Cybersecurity

*Continuity, telework, and cybersecurity training should be given to all new Members of Congress.*

While many House offices were unprepared for the sudden and extended period of remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, freshman Members needed extra guidance due to their lack of institutional experience. Guidance on preparing an office COOP should be provided in new Member orientation, as well as at the beginning of each new session of Congress for Members on an as-needed basis. In addition to COOP guidance, new Members should receive the rigorous cybersecurity training, as previously recommended by the Committee, including information on the risks of working in a remote environment.

### **Stakeholder(s):**

**New Members of Congress**

## 9.13. Operational Changes

*Identify changes made to House operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and determine what—if any—additional changes should be made.*

A study should be conducted related to House functions during the COVID-19 pandemic to evaluate additional operational needs or changes to operations that are no longer appropriate. The COVID-19 pandemic lurches Congress into a continuity of operations plan, but there is still work to be done to prepare for future crises. The Committee passed an additional recommendation on September 24, 2020, requesting a study on House functions during the remote work period. Not only is there likely room for improvement, but there are also some newly implemented practices that might no longer be necessary. This evaluation should:

### 9.13.1. Staffing

*Evaluate staffing levels to ensure the clerk's office has the proper amount of full-time employees (FTEs) to support legislative operations.*

### 9.13.2. Expenses

*Evaluate expenses related to floor/legislative operations, including the cost e-processes as well as what e-processes will remain after the pandemic is over.*

### 9.13.3. Systems

*Evaluate systems in use/or available to the Clerk's office, and the amount needed to support/develop/procure relevant systems to operations.*

### 9.13.4. Operations

*Evaluate operations in use by the standing and select committees to ensure that there is a standard system for the Committees as they update their internal processes.*

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## 10. Article One

### RECLAIM CONGRESS' ARTICLE ONE RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Stakeholder(s)

#### U.S. Congress

The CFGP recommended by the Committee outlines detailed requirements to ensure that congressionally-directed spending are communities' priorities; and is transparent from beginning to end, a good use of taxpayer dollars, and fair. This framework, passed by the Committee on September 24, 2020 holds great potential for Congress. From a constitutional perspective, the CFGP is an important step to reclaiming Congress' Article One responsibility and power of the purse. In addition, the CFGP will provide a much-needed refresh to the stagnant and inefficient authorization and appropriations process. Perhaps more importantly, this program is an important step for the American people. The money allocated to support local communities belongs to them—and they should have full access to the application and selection process, from beginning to end. In addition to the transparency of the CFGP, this program allows constituents to hold their Representative accountable in the way the Founders intended. Executive branch bureaucrats shouldn't be alone in making decisions regarding spending in congressional districts. That responsibility belongs to the community leaders and Members that represent them. This program puts the decision-making into the hands of those who know districts best: the communities themselves and the Members elected to represent their interests in Congress. Committee Members shared the broad goal of restoring Congress to its rightful place as a co-equal branch of government and focused on recommendations to help Congress uphold the responsibilities given by the Founding Fathers. By encouraging more thoughtful discourse and enabling a more productive committee process, these recommendations will help restore public trust in Congress and its Members.

#### 10.1. Hearing Formats

*Incentivize committees to experiment with alternative hearing formats to encourage more bipartisan participation.*

Example alternative hearing formats could include allowing thirty-minute rounds to question witnesses and encourage discourse. For larger committees, groups of Members could be granted thirty-minute blocks and coordinate their questions. Committees could also experiment with formats like seating Members and witnesses at the same table, instead of separating the Members on the dais from witnesses across the room. As this Committee has done, committees could also experiment with seating Members of opposing parties next to each other to encourage dialogue and civility. This Committee, for example, often used a "mixed seating" format during hearings. Such approaches encourage more bipartisan dialogue between Members and signal to the public a willingness to work collaboratively. Committee chairs and ranking members could encourage use of these alternative formats by agreeing to incorporate them into committee rules.

#### 10.2. Bipartisan Staffing

*Committees should hire bipartisan staff approved by both the Chair and Ranking Member.*

Committees should hire bipartisan staff approved by both the Chair and Ranking Member to promote strong institutional knowledge, evidence-based policy making, and a less partisan oversight agenda. Committee administrative staff provide important support by handling tasks such as setting up hearing rooms, handling reports, and archiving materials. Unlike Senate committees, most House committees hire majority and minority administrative personnel. This means there are two staffers handling similar administrative duties. Senate committee staffers who are hired on a bipartisan basis know they work for Members of both parties and approach their work with that understanding. Bipartisan staff also have greater job security as their jobs are not dependent on which party is in the majority. In addition to encouraging bipartisanship, joint hires save money by reducing staff overlap.

### 10.3. Pre-Hearing Meetings

*Committees should hold bipartisan pre-hearing committee meetings.*

Prior to a committee hearing, Members and staff from both parties should meet to set goals for the hearing. Such pre-hearing meetings would reduce the tendency to engage in surprise tactics and defuse partisanship before it begins. By establishing Chair, Ranking Member, and Member expectations in pre-hearing meetings, Members can also better plan and coordinate their witness questions, resulting in a more productive and substantive hearing. The Committee engaged in this practice, with success.

### 10.4. Subcommittee Rules Pilots

*Encourage subcommittees to pilot rules changes that could have a positive effect committee-wide.*

Encourage pilot rule changes in subcommittees. To build support for process and procedural overhauls at the full committee level, some subcommittees should be encouraged to experiment and adopt rule changes as test cases. The Committee recognized that given the nuances of each House committee, some of the recommended changes in this chapter will require an extensive overhaul. Thus, the Committee recommends that rather than no reform, the subcommittee rules changes serve as a pilot program for the committee at large. Subcommittee Members could then report to their full committees, as well as their respective party caucuses, on successful experiments they'd recommend be adopted on a broader level.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Subcommittees**

### 10.5. Bipartisan Retreats

*Bipartisan Member retreats should encourage committee agenda-setting and civil decorum.*

At a bipartisan Member retreat (as recommended by the Select Committee) committees should have at least two-thirds of their Members meet separately to determine the committee's goals for the year, and to discuss how the Members will treat each other in public and in private, and how the committee will treat witnesses during hearings. In the spirit of encouraging bipartisan collaboration, the Committee sought innovative ways to encourage Members to work across the aisle at the committee level. Recognizing that committees are the engines of the policy making process, Committee Members agreed that committees could be more productive if Members agreed to a set of common principles and operational guidelines. Creating a more respectful tone is essential if Members are to build trust and work collaboratively.

### 10.6. Domestic Policy CODELS

*Establish committee-based domestic policy CODELS.*

The House should create bipartisan opportunities for Members to learn more about the federal programs within their committees' jurisdictions. Domestic CODELS would allow Members to have substantive, off-camera conversations about their policy areas, while getting to know each other on a bipartisan basis.

### 10.7. Oxford-Style Debates

*To encourage thoughtful debate and deliberation, establish a pilot for weekly Oxford-style debates on the House floor.*

Establish a pilot for weekly Oxford-style debates on the House floor to be managed by a task force of bipartisan Members established by majority and minority leadership and selected from Members of relevant Member Organizations. Oxford-style debate formats feature a debate on a predetermined topic from two opposing perspectives. The two sides argue either for or against the topic, within a structured format. Weekly Oxford-style debates focusing on national issues would demonstrate that Congress takes the Article One principle of debate and deliberation seriously, and that Members can grapple with important problems while maintaining civility. Debates would also showcase Members with policy expertise and encourage a broader national conversation. A bipartisan working group could determine debate topics, pick teams of Members to argue either side of an issue, and schedule the debates throughout the session. The debates should begin on topics that cut across party lines to demonstrate bipartisan consensus on certain issues. This was recommended by the last select committee, the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress in 1993, but their reforms were not implemented. However, the Committee felt strongly that Congress should return to substantial and quality policy debates. Even if only a temporary, pilot program, the Committee recommends this as an important step to improve bipartisan lawmaking and congressional expertise.

### 10.8. Debate & Deliberation

*Provide Members and staff with training for debate and deliberation skills.*

During new session orientations, Members should attend training on overall legislative debate, Oxford-style debate principles and strategies, as well as workshops on how to process and understand opposing policy views. The training should be bipartisan, led by professionals, and should occur outside of Congress. To further foster bipartisanship, staff should also receive this training.

### 10.9. Regulatory & Legal Resources

*Identify how increased regulatory and legal resources could help strengthen the role of the legislative branch.*

Rather than delegate rulemaking power to the executive branch, Congress should consider employing policy experts to draft, or provide drafting guidance on regulatory rules for implementing the laws Congress passes. This office would serve as a counterpart to similar offices in the executive and judicial branches and would be responsible for issuing legal opinions that support Congress and answer Department of Justice opinions that conflict with congressional intent. Such an office could be housed in the House's Office of General Counsel or the Congressional Research Service. While the Committee considered recommending the full implementation of a Congressional Office on Regulatory Rules and a Congressional Office of Legal Counsel, questions on jurisdiction, logistics, and cost arose during Member discussions. Thus, the Committee recommends an initial study to determine the feasibility of these nonpartisan resources.

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **GAO :**

*The GAO should study the feasibility and effectiveness of a Congressional Office on Regulatory Rules, and a Congressional Office of Legal Counsel.*

### 10.10. Checks & Balances

*Facilitate a true system of checks and balances by ensuring the legislative branch is sufficiently represented in the courts.*

Pass bipartisan legislation establishing Congress has standing in the courts and set expedited procedures for conflicts between the branches. Judicial proceedings are the only route to adjudicate conflicts between the executive and legislative branches, but these proceedings can take months or years to resolve. These delays impede Congress’ ability to uphold its Article One responsibilities. For this reason, Congress should enact legislation establishing that Congress has judicial standing to bring inter-branch conflicts to the courts, and that expedited procedures are necessary.

### 10.11. District Exchange Program

*Establish a district exchange program to allow Members to use the Members’ Representational Allowance for traveling to other Members’ districts.*

As already noted, Members need more opportunities to forge professional and personal relationships. By visiting each other’s districts, Members are more likely to find common issues to work on together. They also gain an appreciation for the issues that their colleagues from different districts confront. For example, a Member from an urban district might not appreciate the policy concerns of their colleagues from rural districts and vice versa. Immersing themselves in the issues of a different district—even if just for one or two days—is a valuable learning and relationship-building experience for Members.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Committee on House Administration :**

*The Committee on House Administration should establish a district exchange program to allow Mem-*

*bers to use the MRA for traveling to other Members’ districts.*

### 10.12. Policy Staff Capacity

*Increase capacity for policy staff, especially for Committees, policy support organizations and a restored Office of Technology Assessment.*

Increase capacity for policy staff, especially for Committees, policy support organizations (GAO, CBO, CRS) and a restored OTA, and perhaps restored capacity to member-supporting legislative service organizations, and updated technology resources. Additionally, House support organizations (GAO, CBO, CRS) should evaluate their mission, how they have evolved over time, and if there is a further need to modernize, and incorporate the results of this review in their budget justifications to the Legislative Branch Subcommittee on Appropriations and other relevant committees. As noted earlier in this chapter, Congress has seen a major reduction in committee staffing levels over the past several decades. Committee staff tend to have more experience and more policy and institutional expertise than personal office staff. The number of policy experts who work at legislative support agencies have also been cut dramatically. The departure of these specialists and the resultant “brain drain” from the Hill leaves Members more dependent on outside experts like lobbyists. Because reduced committee capacity, combined with the expansion of lobbying, has sorely diminished Congress’ ability to carry out its Article One obligations, Committee Members agreed that increasing policy staff capacity is essential.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**Congressional Committees**

**CBO**

**GAO**

**CRS**

### 10.13. Budgeting Process

*Reduce dysfunction in the annual budgeting process through the establishment of a congressionally-directed program that calls for transparency and accountability, and that supports meaningful and transformative investments in local communities across the United States.*

The program will harness the authority of Congress under Article One of the Constitution to appropriate federal dollars.

DEMONSTRATION ONLY

## 11. Budget & Appropriations

### REFORM THE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

The congressional budget and appropriations process is in dire need of reform. Delays, and in many cases, inaction have become commonplace. The result is increased delays throughout Congress and a strained relationship with the executive branch. Without a timely budget, appropriators are unable to plan ahead. Other, essential legislation is forced to the sidelines as Congress scrambles to fund the government through omnibus legislation and CRs. And without timely, individual appropriations bills, federal agencies and programs are crippled by the uncertainty of future funding. Congress has a clear responsibility as outlined in Article One to allocate funds for the federal government—a responsibility that it is not currently meeting. The recommendations outlined in this chapter and formed with the JCBA provide solutions to return to a system of regular order. By improving communication and information sharing between the two branches, and exploring options like a biennial budget, Congress can remove the roadblocks that have encouraged delays and polarization.

#### 11.1. Fiscal State of the Nation

*Require an annual Fiscal State of the Nation.*

Require an annual Fiscal State of the Nation, to be given by the appropriate official(s), as determined by or in coordination with House leadership. Members of Congress must have access to nonpartisan information about the many factors contributing to the nation's debt and deficit in order to develop sound fiscal policies and meet our long-debt and deficit reduction.<sup>306</sup> To encourage communication between the executive and legislative branches and ensure that all parties involved in the budget and appropriations process are making decisions based on a common set of facts, the Committee recommends improving the communication between agency officials and Members of Congress. For Congress to appropriately fund the government, all parties need to be working with the same set of facts. Issues like the national debt, federal budget requests, and deadlines should be understood and agreed upon by all negotiators. A yearly Fiscal State of the Nation discussion will facilitate these types of discussions and ensure all involved start off with the same expectations and understanding.

#### 11.2. Budget Resolution

*Require a biennial budget resolution.*

Require a biennial budget resolution, while maintaining annual appropriations bills. The budget resolution has increasingly become a partisan document, used by congressional leaders to highlight their policy preferences, and in some cases as a political maneuver for Senate passage of non-budget related bills. And when the budget process is inordinately delayed and politicized, it slows down the important work of congressional appropriations. The Committee recommends Congress institute a biennial budget resolution, with annual appropriations bills. By setting 302(a) discretionary spending levels at the start of each Congress, appropriations will be more efficient and able to plan ahead, avoiding unnecessary delays. A biennial budget would also provide Congress additional time to conduct oversight on federal agencies and departments. When Appropriators and authorizers have more certainty, they can turn their attention to those entities that they fund and oversee, respectively. This also serves to buttress Congress's constitutional authority and ensures that appropriated funds are being used responsibly and authorized programs are implemented consistently with Congressional intent. In addition, the Committee recommends enabling a second-session revision of the budget resolution for scoring purposes. This requirement would give authority in the second year of a biennium to adjust the budget resolution's spending and revenue levels, committee allocations, and other amounts to reflect an updated baseline used for scoring purposes.

### 11.3. Budget Deadline

*Implement a deadline for Congress to complete action on a biennial budget.*

Establish a realistic deadline for Congress to complete action on a biennial budget. Congress has continually failed to adopt a budget resolution by the statutorily required April 15 deadline. In those years in which Congress has adopted a budget resolution, it has adopted the budget resolution an average of 36 days after the target date. The current deadline does not reflect a realistic timeline. Prior congressional reforms have delayed the budget deadline to reflect congressional pressures, with success. Thus, the Committee recommends setting a realistic and achievable deadline of May 1 for the first year of the biennium, which would give Congress an opportunity to complete its work on time. This delay is particularly necessary given the recommendation of a biennial budget process.

### 11.4. Budget Submissions

*Enhance the budget submission process from the executive branch.*

Require annual supplemental budget submission data from the President. Congress requires critical data from the executive branch to begin the budget building process. Specifically, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cannot begin constructing its baseline for the upcoming fiscal year without receipt of data, particularly prior-year and current-year spending, that is normally transmitted with the President's budget request. Without receipt of CBO's baseline, Congress generally cannot begin writing its budget resolution. To create additional time for developing the baseline, and therefore, the budget resolution and various appropriations bills, the executive branch should be required to provide a supplemental budget submission that is separate from the President's policy proposals no later than December 1 of each calendar year. This supplemental budget submission should include:

- Prior year fiscal data
- Current year fiscal data
- Credit re-estimates for the current year

#### Stakeholder(s):

#### **Congressional Budget Office (CBO):**

*This data would allow CBO to begin constructing the baseline, as well as subsequently to enable the Budget*

*and Appropriations Committees to begin preliminary work in writing the budget resolution and appropriations bills earlier in the process.*

### 11.5. Budget Process Evaluation

*Evaluate the effects of the biennial budget process to expediting congressional work.*

Encourage examination of how a two-year budget resolution will change the schedule or approach in the budget process. To be fully ready when two-year budget resolutions begin, the Budget and Appropriations Committees should review their schedules and procedures to determine the best ways of using the new biennial budget resolution to expedite congressional work on appropriations and other budgetary legislation. Their findings should be conveyed to authorizing committees, and Congress as a whole.

### 11.6. Budget Enforcement

*Strengthen budget enforcement through the reconciliation process.*

The budget process, particularly in the Senate, is susceptible to being used as a procedural maneuver to bypass the filibuster threshold. This has tainted the larger budget reconciliation process. Thus, the Committee recommends that the budget reconciliation process only be used to reduce deficits. If Congress adds to the deficit, it should follow regular order to allow a fuller debate. In addition, Congress could consider requiring an

explanation in the budget resolution committee report and conference agreement as to why assumed changes in direct spending or revenue have not been reconciled. Reconciliation is the principle enforcement procedure for direct spending and revenue changes. There are reasons why some items may not be reconciled but requiring an explanation may stop the assumption of large savings that are not intended to be implemented. Thus, it would help produce a more realistic budget path in the budget resolution.

### 11.7. Budget Resolution

*Allow more information to be included in the budget resolution.*

Include total combined outlays and revenues for tax expenditures as an optional item in the budget resolution. Lastly, the Committee recommends an optional requirement for including a total level of tax expenditures in the list of what could be in a budget resolution. Given the fact that tax expenditures are a major component of the federal budget, JCBA Members argued that this would encourage much needed transparency to the budget process. This recommendation also brings needed flexibility to the budget process.

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## 12. Schedule & Calendar

### IMPROVE THE CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

#### Stakeholder(s)

#### U.S. House of Representatives

There is a direct tension between the amount of work that Members must accomplish in Washington, D.C. and their district, and the reality that there are only seven days in each week, and 52 weeks in each year. Between committee work, time on the House floor, running a personal office, and constituent work in the district, the demand for time is constant. In addition to work pressures, Members of Congress each have their own personal schedules to consider. For example, while the August work period allows some Members with families to spend time with their children, other schools in different regions of the country start earlier. The calendar should work to reflect these differing start dates. However, there is potential for reform by identifying ways to spend time more efficiently, while still allowing Members the flexibility they need to develop their own schedule. This chapter presents solutions to eliminate the biggest time-related headaches, like travel days and overlapping committee commitments, and considering blocked committee assignments designated committee time, and new scheduling technology to create a common committee calendar. By considering how to spend time more efficiently, the House can not only reduce frustrating conflicts, but provide Members with the time they need to focus on the work that matters to the American people.

#### 12.1. Meeting Times

*Establish specific committee-only meeting times when Congress is in session.*

Establish a blocked schedule when committees may meet and extend formal protections for committee work. One of the biggest concerns the Committee heard from Members is that they feel they need to be in too many places at the same time, and often point to overlapping and conflicting committee meetings. The Committee found that since the 110th Congress, Members sit on an average of 5.4 committees and subcommittees. Efforts to deconflict committee meetings, to the extent possible, would allow Members to spend more substantial time on committee business and would hopefully reduce the need for certain committees to be prioritized over others. Evidence from state legislatures, as discussed above, has shown block schedule can work to great success. Thus, the Committee recommends the House establish a blocked schedule when committees may meet and extend formal protections for committee work.

#### 12.2. Committees Calendar

*Create a common committee calendar portal to help with scheduling and reduce conflicts.*

Create a common committee calendar portal so that committees can have visibility into other committee activities and potential committee Member conflicts... The Committee recommends creation of a common committee calendar portal so that committees can have visibility into other committee activities and potential committee member conflicts. While Congressional staff already has access to the date and time of other Committee meetings, it is not readily available how many of their Members would be conflicted were they to schedule their committee meeting in conflict with another committee meeting. An internal portal that tracks Member obligations based on their committee assignment would help committees schedule their meetings when most of their Members are available.

#### 12.3. Committee Work

*Establish specific days—or weeks—where committee work takes priority.*

To allow Members to take deeper dives into their committee work, committee-activity-only weeks—or even committee-activity-only days—without any floor activity could be established, building on the precedent laid

out during the COVID pandemic... To allow Members to take deeper dives into their committee work, committee-activity-only weeks—or even committee-activity-only days—without any floor activity could be established, building on the precedent laid out during the public health emergency.

#### 12.4. Workdays

*Ensure there are more workdays spent working than traveling.*

Future Congressional calendars should aim to maximize full working days to ensure there are substantially more working days than travel days... By rearranging the intensity, duration, and frequency of D.C. work, the number of travel days can be reduced, allowing either more time legislating or more time in the district. A calendar with less days interrupted by travel would allow for more time for the committee-related reforms outlined above. Previously considered adjustments to the House schedule included five-day weeks with three D.C. work weeks followed by one district work week (“three on, one off”), a five-day “one on, one off” schedule. Five-day weeks would likely reduce travel days because Members would have less time to go back and forth. If the House schedule included a longer stretch than five-days, such as nine-day “super week” then travel could be reduced further.

#### 12.5. Retreats

*The congressional calendar should accommodate a bipartisan member retreat.*

Experts argue that the more time Members spend together, the more likely they can develop a productive working relationship. Along those lines, making room in the congressional calendar for a bipartisan retreat will improve the institution’s ability to advance an agenda for the American people and improve civility. The Committee previously recommended establishment of a biennial bipartisan retreat for Members and their families at the start of each Congress.

### Administrative Information

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